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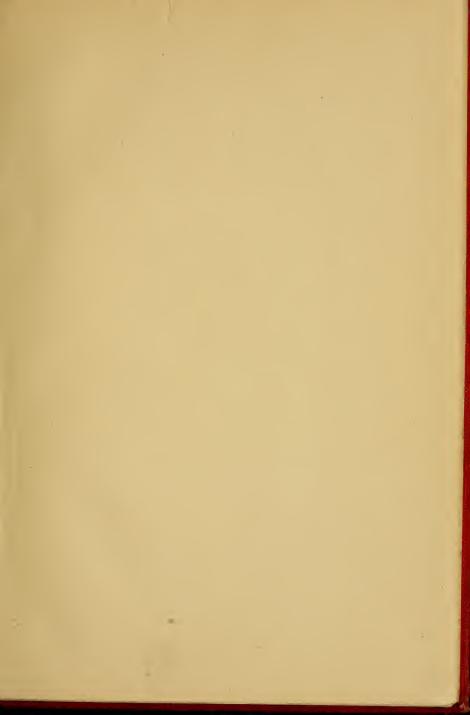


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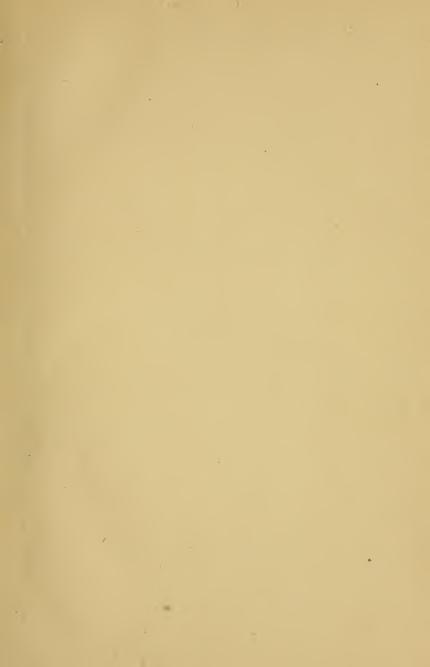
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BY EDWARD MEYERS

Adventures of a Former Agent

of the

Kaiser's Secret Service

who was Lured

by the

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A FOREWORD

While Germany is still threatening to balk at the terms of peace as laid down by the Allies there is just one man in the United States who did active work in the secret service of the Imperial Government and who fought in the first line trenches for the Fatherland. How he made his way from South Africa to England, thence to Holland, and finally to the battlefront to fight for the Kaiser makes many a chapter of thrilling adventure. He was a son of autocracy at the start of the story, which develops on the following pages, but he ended loval to democracy. In his stirring career he found the one woman he loved and married her—a Briton. He matched his wits against the vaunted system of German military thoroughness and won, escaping from the Fatherland. His mind had revolted against the spirit of Prussianism, and he rendered valuable aid to the Allies, but this did not prevent his being incarcerated in the detention camp at Fort Oglethorpe, a victim of circumstances, which makes an interesting climax to one of the war's most unique experiences.



War Declared; I Escape from South Africa to England

ROM my earliest days the boys at school had christened me "The Adventurer." Through my college course this nickname stuck to me and there must have been something ominous in it, for as life turned out I ran the gamut of excitement and had experiences that are not often crowded into one's existence.

When I was a youth of 19, just a year out of college, a year I spent in the study of chemistry, some relatives of our family who lived in South Africa came to visit us at Koenigsberg, Prussia. The stories I heard of that country from a cousin filled me with a desire to go there and seek adventure. My father tried to dissuade me, but I would not listen to any argument. My mind was made up and eventually I started for that land.

My natural thought when I arrived at Cape Town was to turn my knowledge of chemistry to use and I started my career in South Africa selling patent medicines in Johannesburg, Transvaal. From one thing to another I drifted and after several years of doing this and that I picked up secret service work for a large fire insurance company. William Hoskens, M.P., a very well known and influential man in mining circles and a progressive leader in South Africa, gave me my start. My first job was the investigation of an arson case in which \$20,000 were involved. I managed to save this for the company, of which Mr. Hoskens was the general manager. In South Africa at that time it was well known that 90 fires out of 100 had their origin at the hands of a firebug. My first assignment interested me a lot and in me the lust to do detective work was born. I was at this time about 22 years old.

After coming out victor I was the terror of the Reef Road,

along the Main Reef to the east and west side of Johannesburg. All the gold and coal mines were in this region. Most of the shopkeepers were Russian Jews who had concessions in the different mines. The police worked hand in glove with me and through this connection I came into close touch with the Government officials.

Little did I dream then that the training and experience I was getting would be some day turned to the advantage of the Kaiser and that I would be one of his secret service agents.

Every year or so it was my custom to make extended trips to England, France and Germany. My last voyage to Europe was made at the beginning of 1914 and late in June I left Hamburg for the return to South Africa aboard the S.S. "Admiral" of the Woermann Line. We arrived at Durban at the end of July, the gala season, when the elite of the Transvaal came down to the coast to spend the cold months, for at that season it is winter in South Africa. I had been there only a few days when word was flashed throughout the world that a member of the Austrian royal family had been assassinated and through this incident friendly relations between the countries of Europe were at the point of being ruptured.

Everything pointed to war. Germany, Austria and France were ready at a moment's notice to spring at each others' throats. If war started I was determined to get back to Germany at all hazards and fight for my native land. Soon a call came from the German consulate for all native-born Germans of military age to report for registration. It was an exciting day for us, a Sunday morning, the first week in August. War was now on between Russia and Germany, but England was still neutral. I went to the consul and reported. I produced my military passport and lost no time in making preparations to return to Germany. Passage was booked for me for England en route to Germany aboard the S.S. "Borda," a P. and O. liner, which had arrived from Australia. embarked at eight in the morning, but the ship did not leave until noon. As we left Durban Bay th enews was spread that England had declared war on Germany.

This had been suspected for some time and I had a secret

understanding with Consul Speir, the German attache, that should England decide to make war against Germany while I was at sea I should try to fight my way to Germany, making use of my experience as a private detective to help me on my way. I was confident that I could make good.

There were a large number of the Kaiser's subjects aboard the vessel, bound for Germany. When the captain received information that the two countries were hostile he ordered all Germans to be seated at special tables so that there would be no trouble. I immediately made up my mind not to mingle with the Germans and remained among the Australians and others of the allied nations.

A steward came to me and asked, "Are you not a German?"

"No," I answered, "I am a South African."

"But you are booked by the German consulate," he retorted.

That was true, but I explained that the reason for this was that I had agreed to go as an interpreter for the Germans aboard in payment for my passage to England. I was left among the Australians and South Africans and was not obliged to sit with the Germans. I was one of the first to give three cheers for King George. This was done when we were only an hour out of Durban. All the Britons were enthusiastic; the Germans solemn and downhearted. They feared that they were going to be interned at the next port.

During the voyage from Durban to Cape Town there was a spell of solemnity over the vessel. The Germans kept to themselves. They were permitted to mingle with the Britons on the promenade deck but few of them availed themselves of the opportunity. They kept pretty close to their cabins. The Germans appeared downcast at the idea of becoming prisoners of war for the duration of hostilities, but there was an undercurrent of confidence that in the end the Fatherland would prevail. They were outnumbered aboard ship ten to one and there was nothing for them to do but accept their fate with the best possible grace. All was quiet and serene on the way to

Cape Town and we arrived there on a Saturday morning 36 hours after England's declaration of war.

At Cape Town we saw ten soldiers, with war equipment, their bayonets gleaming in the brilliant sun of a South African noon. They were in field uniform, ready to go to German East or West Africa and they were waiting like watchdogs to seize any German who might be on the "Borda." They had been already apprised that there were German reservists on the ship, going back to join the colors and they had orders to make them prisoners of war.

I stood at the rail of the steamer awaiting the signal to go ashore. I still remained in the company of the colonials when the Germans were ordered to go to the dining-room. Most of the tourists were keen to take a trip about Cape Town. They were eager to see the Table Mountains and as I had been around that part of the country a lot and knew every inch of interest, I volunteered to act as guide. I was one of the first to leave the ship as she docked.

The soldiers and the immigration officials boarded the ship and they went to the dining-room to take charge of the Germans and while they were doing this we went ashore and started on our sightseeing trip.

The "Borda" was to leave on Sunday morning. I took my new found friends for several hours around the Table Mountains and explained that I had to see some business friends, and they went back to the ship. The person I went to see was Teddy Roscoe, a South African by birth and district manager of the African Life Insurance Company. He was an old friend of mine and I felt confident that I could tell him of the trouble I was in. I explained to him the chances I was taking to get to Europe.

When I pictured my situation to Ted he agreed to put his car at my disposal, and I motored down to the German embassy. I told the consul the difficulties I was in and that I would probably be the only German who would start for England. He asked me if I wanted any financial assistance. I told him no; that I was well equipped to get to England. He

assured me that if I needed any assistance to go to a person whose address he gave me in London. This man was a person well up in the financial world and he would have done anything for me as a German. However, I never had to go to him, as things turned out. The German Consul wished me luck and admired my pluck in trying to break through the British lines. He bade me farewell late in the afternoon. I had to leave on the quiet. I could not be seen with the Consul, for that would have attracted suspicion and I would have been interned with the rest. I went down to Roscoe's house and met Mrs. Roscoe, and we had supper and went to a theatre. As we finished around midnight, I was wondering whether I would have another party like this for some time to come. did not know whether I was ever going to get to the end of my journey successfully. Our little group drifted back to the docks in the solemn silence of midnight.

The entrance to the docks was guarded by British Customs officials. We had gone about 200 yards in the car when we saw two men walking along with handbags. These were German reserve officers. I recognized one of them as an acting private secretary to the German consul in Durban whom I had met in my dealings with him. I pulled up my car and asked him what had happened to all the Germans in Cape Town. He told me that all had been taken off the steamer and had been interned. He added that the authorities would not believe stories he and his friend told that they were South Africans, and that they had been ordered off the steamer.

He then handed me a letter, asking me to mail it in London. He told me the contents was an order for munitions for German troops in West Africa. The letter was addressed to an Italian firm in Cardiff. I took his letter and he bade me farewell and wished me luck. Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe and myself journeyed on to the ship. They stayed with me to the last moment, coming into the dining-room with me. Before entering the steamship, I handed Mr. Roscoe my military passports and other documents I carried with me, telling him that in

case I was interned to tear all my papers into a thousand pieces and throw them away.

Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe then went with me. I saw my luggage guarded by two soldiers. It was on a table in the dining-room. I asked Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe to take a seat while I would go to my cabin. On my arrival in there I found it lighted, but empty. The place had been stripped. This did not put any fear into me. I had suspected that such a thing would take place. I called immediately on the chief steward and demanded to know why my belongings had been taken out of my cabin.

He laughed, and said, "You are a German, and you are going to be interned in Cape Town." I said, "What do you mean? I'm a German? Well, if I'm German and you call me that you must be one of those thick-headed Austrians who are being led around like the parish bull with a ring in his nose."

He sneered a sort of a mean leer at me. There was all the pent-up expression of hate in his look. He despised me, I knew. He did not believe my story that I was a South African. He told me that anything I said was futile; I must go before the captain. This was an hour after midnight when most of the passengers had turned in.

I demanded that I should be brought up to see the captain. I found him in his cabin, seated with the agent of the P. and O. line, both of them enjoying a whiskey and soda. I demanded to know why my luggage should have been taken out of my cabin. I claimed that I was a native of South Africa and that I had been simply acting as an interpreter for the Germans who were aboard the ship. I told him that at the time I had taken this position England was not at war and that if I had been aware that hostilities were to start between the two countries I would never have mingled with the Germans. I was forced to make this statement to make the officials believe that I was pro-Ally. At this time I had determined to be faithful to my country. I was going to answer the call to the colors. It was my own land; my native country and I was going to fight my way to Germany at any cost.

I did not really believe in what Germany stood for; but

deep down in my heart there was the sentiment which Walter Scott expressed so many years ago-

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead; Who never to himself hath said: "This is my own, my native land'?"

Today I have changed my opinions, and why not? Any person with intelligence may do that. I was brought up in the atmosphere of militarism. As a boy I saw all the machinations of the German army. I never longed for it, however. I had the spirit to roam. I wanted to get away out into the world. I wanted to be an adventurer; I wanted to be an explorer in the world; foreign lands called me. I longed to be a soldier of fortune; I was willing to wage my wits against others, and I think I did, if you will look over what happened on the "Borda."

Up in the cabin the captain asked me to give him some evidence that I was all right. Teddy Roscoe and his wife, who were seated down below waiting for me, were called on and he testified. His position as head of the African Life Assurance Company gave him weight enough to clear me. He told that he had known me for fourteen years and he vouched for the fact that I was a native of South Africa. Furthermore, I had papers from the chiefs of police of various towns in the Transvaal which showed the sort of work I had been doing and they were all in my favor. The captain was convinced that I was all that I represented myself and he gave orders to the chief steward that my cabin should be given back to me, and my luggage was returned and after spending an hour with my friends, the Roscoes, during which time the captain returned my papers, I went to my bunk and to sleep, dreaming of what was going to happen, perhaps, in the next few days of what might be a most eventful voyage for me.

I was not a coward. I did not fear death. I wanted to be in the war. I hoped to be in the thick of things. In those days my idea was to fight for Germany. The battlefield lured me. I sought the great adventure. The one thing I hated and the thing that some times made me shiver and cringe away in my cabin was the thought that some day I might be dis-

covered, taken off the ship and interned in a camp somewhere in England or in France to spend my days with nothing to do but think, and I used to wonder what these thoughts would be. Perhaps bitter; surely not sweet.



Experiences in London and Flight to Holland

Twas six o'clock the following morning when we started, a Sunday morning. We were then on our way to England, more than a fortnight we were to be on the water. Aboard the ship there were lots of young Australians who were on their way to spend a holiday in England. They were of the military age and little did they realize that their holiday would be spent on the battlefields of Flanders. We were two days on the ocean when a sport committee was appointed. They elected me secretary. Between other passengers aboard we had an Australian pastor who was always in close touch with the captain, chief engineer and wireless officer.

The parson was an innocent sort of a person and he and I struck up a friendship. He was in close touch with the wireless man and every morning he used to go up and get the positions of the British cruisers and the German raiders. He would come down and tell me and I made note of this in my diary. The ship was taking a new course, something that was devised to baffle any German ship that might be out looking for prey. I had access to the maps which told the latitude and longitude of the course the vessel was steaming and I took careful note of this. Eventually when I came into a German port this information was of great value to the Kaiser's government.

We were just two days away from Las Palmas, Canary Islands, where we expected to take on coal, when a wireless was received that the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse," one of the biggest of the German transatlantic fleet, was in the vicinity with a load of German reservists who were going to West Africa to help out in the situation there. It was reported that the big ship had been sinking many merchantmen on its way, but we were assured that we were well protected by the British

fleet. All had been gay aboard ship since we left Durban. Gayety now turned to very sombre and sobre thoughts. Every one was on the qui vive, wondering if a German raider was to be encountered. We were steaming along in a placid ocean in the middle of the night, looking up at the myriad stars in the heavens, and thinking of those back home who were waiting for us. We always travelled in darkness. Everything was black aboard ship. Suddenly a searchlight was thrown on us with its quivery, silvery sheen. Most of the passengers were trembling. They thought sure it was one of the German raiders. It proved, however, to be H. M. S. "Queensland," one of Great Britain's ocean patrols. A boarding crew came over the side and examined our papers and when it was found that the ship was a Briton it was announced that the "Borda," captain, crew and passengers, could go on their way in perfect safety.

On the next morning we were called down to the diningroom to receive the latest news and the captain informed us that the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" had been sunk by H. M. S. "Highflyer" off the African coast. Enthusiasm was rife aboard ship. Cheers were given freely and there was no one who shouted more loudly than I. It was necessary. I had to play my part. I must not be discovered.

When we heard that the "Highflyer" had taken one of the first victims of the war, one of the earliest pieces of retribution that was to come to the Kaiser's forces, all aboard ship were happy and as we sailed along the seas we were not in fear of the submarine menace. We were all confident that Great Britain's boast that she was the dominant force in the seven seas was making good. Sports went on as usual and no one gave a thought to a German menace. We came on to Brest and there we were met by a fleet of French warships. They were the outposts, the watchdogs which guarded the entrance to the British channel. When we saw them there were more cheers, an added lot of confidence. All aboard were sure that England and the allied countries held the winning hand.

As we moved up to Brest, a boarding crew from the French fleet came over the side to inspect the ship. I felt a bit nervous

then. I wondered if they would suspect me. Several of the crew who were of German or Austrian birth were marked for detention, but they were not taken off until the vessel reached London. As we proceeded there was one remarkable sight which no one who was on that voyage can forget. As far as the eye could reach you could see English patrol vessels. The British Navy was doing its job in a thorough manner and down into the horizon you could see the smoke from the busy stacks of the little watchdogs of the sea.

The passengers as they promenaded the decks, watching the shadowy shores of France, were making dates to meet in Picadilly. They felt confident that it was only a matter of a little time before they would be strolling around the Strand and seeing London.

When we came up to Tilbury, England, an English patrol vessel met us, and the deck officer shouted through a megaphone that all on board who were not British must line up for inspection. It mattered not whether they were of the allied nations or not. I shuddered a bit then. I was afraid that after all my previous luck in getting past the various officials I was going to be captured. There were eight of us who were obliged to leave the ship. There were Hollanders and other neutrals among the eight. We were taken aboard a tug boat and sent ashore at Tilbury. The rest of the party proceeded to London, and afterwards I found out why this happened. It was because the Thames was a mine field and the British Admiralty had issued orders that no foreigner, no matter who he was, should be allowed to see what preparations had been made to deend the British capitol.

None of us knew what was going to happen as we disembarked. We were all in a quandary. For an hour we waited and finally were dispatched on a train to London. We all felt a bit squeamish. I had visions of an incarceration in a detention camp. The suspense was rather bad for the nerves. Everything went well, though, and when we arrived in London, I took a taxi and motored over from the St. Paul's station to the Bedford Hotel, where I had stopped only three months before. It was a Sunday morning when I arrived in London, gloomy

and quiet. I was more lonesome than I had been in a long time. I sat planning how I would get to Rotterdam, for I knew that from there I could get into Germany. I had one friend who had been in the British army, Harold Irvine. I figured that I could use him as an instrument in getting a clean bill of health to clear out of Great Britain. I had seen placards all over the city to the effect that any one who harbored an enemy alien would be liable to a fine or imprisonment. He was my very good friend and I did not think that he would betray me. I made an appointment to meet him Monday morning. He had applied for a commission in the army and considered his country's fate far above that of a friend.

I arrived at his office at eleven o'clock. I was asked to wait a bit in an ante room. I sat there about twenty minutes when the door opened and two huge chaps came in. I immediately recognized them as secret service men. True was my surmise, for I discovered in a short time that they were from Scotland Yard. Irvine, whom I considered my best friend, had thrown friendship into the discard. Loyalty to his country prevailed and he had turned me over to the British authorities.

"Wie gehts," said one of the men; but I was too old a bird to be caught with chaff. I said: "I speak English; don't you?" Irvine had not figured that I could have been anywhere in the last three months but in Berlin. They questioned me as to where I had been and when I told them that I had just arrived from South Africa they smiled a bit, and appeared very dubious. I showed them, however, the stub of my ticket on the "Borda."

Even then they were suspicious and called up the office of the P. and O. line to find out if there had been a passenger by the name of Edward Meyers on the trip from Durban. They were assured of this. Still they were curious. They wanted to know what I was doing in England at this time and why I wanted to go to Holland.

There was a battle of wits. I was matching mine against theirs, and I felt that I was going to be the winner. I told

them that my sister had been recently married and that I had received a letter telling me that she was going to live in Rotterdam. I was to find her address when I reached Rotterdam. Things were not so strict in those days. War was only a month old and you could get by with things then that would never pass muster as conditions grew more serious.

I was a bit surprised that they left me off so leniently. I found out later, though, why it was. They were to keep me under observation. They knew that I had been a detective and had been working in secret service and they could not figure my mission being anything else than that of an operative in the espionage service of Germany. I told them I was a Russian. Perhaps they believed it; perhaps they didn't. At any rate I seemed to convince them that I was honest and not inimical to Britain.

For years I had been experienced in the Secret Service. I knew the ins and outs of the profession and I could not help but chuckle inwardly when I saw the methods of those two Scotland Yard men. They searched me for papers that might convict me. They even made me take my trousers down. All the time there was safely esconsed inside the puttees of my Scotch riding suit my German military passport. When they got as far as the leggings, they quit. They were convinced that I had nothing on my person that was not right. I had prepared my pockets before I left Cape Town. I suspected that I might get into hot water somewhere en route and was going to be prepared. I played the game of bluff and it won.



III.

Off to Fight for Germany

THE Scotland Yard men went back to Irvine and told him that there was nothing against me. They stated that I had just come from South Africa, something that he had not believed. He was somewhat remorseful to think that he had put me under suspicion. He apologized profusely and asked me to have a dinner party with him that night to square matters. I told him I would meet him at eight o'colck. I knew, though, that he would never see me then. There was a ship leaving for Holland from the port of Tilbury that evening and if I was to get out of England I had to be aboard at six o'clock in the evening.

Irvine who owned a big racing stable in Durban and who knew that I was always interested in this sport was sure that he could draw me out by asking questions about turf conditions in Durban. There was no sentiment to him. I told him just what horses of his had been successful. I mentioned the results of the big July meet in Durban and chatted of the old friends that were common to both of us in the days before the war in South Africa. Eventually he saw his mistake. He realized then that I had not come from Berlin, but that I had been in South Africa. I left him at noon prepared to start on the big adventure. I often wonder what he thought as he waited for me at the Trocadero. I've never seen him since.

It was a case of "Now or Never." I was going to get to Holland and from there to Germany. I was seeking the great adventure and up to date I had been a winner and I had high hopes that I was going to be a winner in the end.

I had told the detectives that I was going over to Holland and was to return to fight in the British army to cover myself.

Once more I was forced to think fast. I took a taxi down

to Oxford Street to the office of Thomas Cook's tourist agency. I asked for a return ticket from Rotterdam, because I wanted to make my story to the Scotland Yard men plausible. I knew I would not come back and I was glad enough to pay the extra money. I was asked if I was an Englishman and of course I said yes. I motored back to the hotel and the girl clerk seemed to take a very friendly interest in me. She asked me all sorts of questions about what I was going to do in London. Her interest in me was rather odd. I knew better than ever then that I was under observation. I told her that I was going to my room and that I did not want to be disturbed until six o'clock in the evening. By that time I hoped to be on my way to Holland. I had to catch a train at four to reach Tilbury in time for the sailing at six.

Evidently there was a lot of interest in me. I seemed to be appreciated a whole lot. When I got up to my room I found a maid busy cleaning the windows in spite of the fact that I had been there only a short time. She was very affable and just a trifle over friendly. I was assured once more that I was being watched. I dismissed her, telling her that I wanted to take a nap. I lit a cigarette so I would not fall asleep and listened intently. I could hear her footsteps on the soft carpet outside the room. I packed my grip with the necessary things for my proposed flight to Holland. I then walked down the servants' staircase and went into the office. I told the clerk that I was to keep an engagement in Cardiff and that I would be back in a day or so.

She said, "Wait just a minute, please."

I answered, "I have no time; I must catch my train."

I then went out into the street and hailed a taxicab. As I entered it I noticed two men on the sidewalk watching me and evidently taking down the number. I was sure that they were secret service operatives. I did not know London particularly well, but there was one section with which I was familiar. We drove down to Oxford Street, where I dismissed the cab and took another one that was passing by. Once again I figured that I was on my way to a winning hand. Holland was still

in sight and then after that I knew where I was going to stand.

All the while I had my watch synchronized to the railroad time. Everything was measured up to the last minute. I arrived at the St. Paul station about ten minutes before the departure of the train. I did not want to incur any annoying investigation, so after giving my luggage to a porter, I crossed the street and went to a popular bar where there are many charming maids serving drinks, and chaffed and chatted with one of them until there were only about two minutes left before the train would pull out for Tilbury. In the hurly-burly of the getaway I saw a man who looked as if he might be one of the secret service. There was little time left for formalities. He came up hurriedly to me and said, "Are you English?" I answered him, "Sure thing," and he passed me on. Probably my old Scotch riding suit helped a lot. It always had been lucky for me and to this day I consider it a fetish.

Going down to Tilbury, a two hours' ride from London, I was seated in a compartment with one woman and five men. The woman had a decidedly Teutonic cast of countenance. She looked me over keenly. I was watching her, too. When we got off the train to take the little lugger that was to bring us aboard the "Batavia IV" we were forced to pass in single file through an entrance to the gangway. The Germanic looking woman asked me if I would carry a grip that she had. I did not want to be unchivalrous, but I suspected that she was working for the Kaiser and I was not foolish enough to be caught with any suspicious luggage. I was forced to refuse her request and an obliging young Hollander helped her out. Later on she was one of the party that was refused a trip to Rotterdam.

Aboard the lugger, out in the Thames, there was added worry. The officials called up to the officer of the deck "78 passengers." They were all checked up. All of the tourists were asked to explain why they were travelling and no one could get through unless he had a very specific reason for going. Government service or pressing family affairs were the necessary items. My Teutonic acquaintance who wanted me to carry

her grip had a Swiss passport, but it did not help her. She was one of the few left behind.

"All passports must be shown," was shouted. The 78 of us were ushered unto the cabin and at the end of a long table there sat a burly big Hollander, an immigration agent, and at his right hand was a British secret service man. I figured that if I lingered along to the end of the line I might be suspected, so I went up with a good show of assurance and was fourth to be queried.

"Where is your passport?" the immigration officer asked. "Passport? Why, I haven't any," I replied. "And why not," he asked.

"I have come from South Africa and there was no question of passports when I left there," I retorted.

"Oh, so you are from South Africa," the husky Hollander

queried. "From what part, may I ask?"

"Pretoria," was my reply. "You don't say! Perhaps you know something of that city?"

He asked me where I lived there and I told him on Church Street right near where Oom Paul had his residence. He queried me further, but I knew Pretoria well and when I mentioned the fact that the French Consulate was opposite Oom Paul's house he was convinced that I was a native of South Africa and insisted that I should be allowed to proceed on my way, passports or no passports. I spoke to him in the dialect of the Transvaal and when I did this he was convinced that I had been telling the truth.

Thus I was on my way. I had slipped through more than one trap and was on the high road to what was my ideal. Maybe it was not right; but I felt it was and I was going to go through with it no matter what happened.

IV.

In the First Line Trenches

FEW minutes later we were aboard the Holland liner, "Batavia IV." No further questions were asked. We simply showed our tickets and were ushered to our respective cabins. We lost no time in getting clear of Tilbury. There were aboard ship a rather strange collection of passengers, including several refugees who had escaped right from the jaws of the German army of the Crown Prince which was then making its grand rush on Paris. Many exciting tales were exchanged as we sat at the dinner table. There was a spirit of uneasiness as we swept along through the Channel. No one went to sleep that night. I felt somewhat reassured, however, for it was the first time since I had left South Africa that I was on neutral ground. As we proceeded on our way in the night, a remarkably clear moonlit one, we saw a constant illumination of the sky and the water by hundreds of searchilghts from the patrol vessels. We were hailed many times by the British scouts, each time the question being, "Are there any Germans aboard?" When a negative reply was made we were allowed to continue and each moment I began to breathe more freely.

In the morning when I went to pay the steward my account for the cafe and smoking room we got chatting and when he learned that I had come from South Africa he told me the captain was the commander of the vessel which had carried Paul Krueger's body back to his native land for burial. I received an introduction to him and he invited me to join him in a drink. He said he was pleased to meet me and we had an interesting chat over South Africa. He had absolutely no suspicion of who I really was. At half past nine in the morning we docked in Rotterdam.

Immigration officials once more boarded the vessel and demanded to see the passports of the passengers. I felt at ease then, for I was in a neutral country and all the time I had my German military passport inside of one of my leggings. I waited until all the passengers with whom I had been chatting the night before had disembarked. I then showed my credentials to the chief immigration officer. He smiled, congratulated me for getting through, and wished me luck for the rest of my journey.

I took a taxicab, and still wearing my Scotch riding suit, I made straight for the German embassy. In the office the consul's secretary, being suspicious that I was an Englishman, because of my clothing, asked me what my business was. I replied to him in German that I was a native of Germany, come from South Africa, and that I desired to join my flag. He was still somewhat doubtful.

I told him that I had information of a very important nature which I wished to divulge to the consul in person. I produced my passport and after the secretary conferred with him in his private quarters I was admitted to his presence.

When he heard me he ordered me to proceed by the first train for Wesel, the nearest fortress town to the Dutch frontier. I told him, though, that I had been under a rather severe mental strain for several days and that I had not had much sleep. I asked permission to stay in Rotterdam, so that I might be freshened up by a good night's rest. This he granted me, telling me to depart on the train which left at six in the morning for the frontier.

Only a short distance away all the grimness of stern war was raging, but Rotterdam was still gay and unaffected to all outward appearances. This, I realized, was to be my last day as my own commander; the final chance to enjoy myself in civilian clothes. I was now under military orders with leave for only a few short hours. Instead of going to bed I went out and saw all the sights of the night life of the Dutch city. I had one grand, final, jollification and returned to the hotel at five in the morning. I took a bath, shaved and was on the train bound for Germany and the big adventure at six o'clock.

Evidently the German consul at Rotterdam had communicated with German military authorities at the frontier, for I was met as we crossed into my native land by two representatives of the German Imperial headquarters, a branch of Wilhelmstrasse. They took me off the train at the little border town of Emmerich and escorted me to a waiting automobile and we drove on to Wesel. They realized that I had information that would very likely be of considerable value to the Fatherland.

I was received by Ober Lieutenant von Hahnke who was in command of the branch office of the German headquarters in Wesel. Von Hahnke was a relative of General von Hahnke, a close friend of the German Emperor. He interrogated me at length and I gave him the details of my trip from South Africa down to the most minute incidents which might prove of use to the German cause. He asked me to make out a written report of what I had seen; of the warships and where their approximate stations were; what I had seen in London as regarded advertising; what the papers were saying and what was the general morale and condition of the British people. I made a very complete report from the notes which I had made on the voyage and which I had secreted in my boots.

He asked me what my intentions were and whether I would like to continue in secret service work and go back to England or what my preference would be. He evidently admired what I had gone through and the information I divulged, for I was granted permission to have my wishes considered. I told him that having escaped with my life by more than one close shave I did not care to go back to England. I told him that I had made the dangerous voyage so that I might get into the actual fighting. I was eager for excitement and my dearest wish would be granted if I were attached to the regiment which was furthest advanced into France; I wanted to get into the first line trenches and see action as quickly as possible.

"Well," he laughed, "the regiment that is nearest Paris, the Fifty-seventh Prussian Infantry, is stationed in Wesel, and I will recommend that you be attached to it in a day or two, provided you are successful in passing a physical examination."

He ordered me then to take up my quarters with Captain Klarmayer, who was the station commandant of Wesel. Little did I realize that here, among my own countrymen, I was under greater suspicion than I had been in England. In spite of my military passport and the report that I had made, the authorities in Wesel were not yet convinced that I was not in the service of Great Britain.

I could feel that I was being watched closely from the time I reported. I was asked for the addresses of my relatives. I gave as a reference my brother, an advocate in the Prussian High Courts in Koenigsberg, my birthplace. It was not until a detailed description had been received from my brother that the veil of suspicion was lifted. For the two days that I spent at the home of Captain Klarmayer I never once was alone. Always some member of the household would accompany me on my trips about, and always I could see a soldier lurking nearby. Even when I went into the shops to make purchases of cigarettes and other incidentals I would see a gray-clad figure in close proximity.

The thoroughness of German military methods were demonstrated in the actions of the Wesel officials. Ober Lieutenant von Hahnke admitted after my identification had been fully established through my brother's description of me that I had been under observation. He said no chances were being taken of having a spy in the ranks. So, on the morning of my third day in Wesel I was despatched to the headquarters of the Fifty-seventh for physical examination and von Hahnke gave me a letter of recommendation to the commander of the company to which I would be detailed.

The letter explained my desire to get into quick action and in return for the information I had given to the Germans it was recommended that I be permitted to leave on the first possible troop train for France. The period of training for the raw recruits was an average of eight weeks, but I was given special instruction and my training was hurried along so fast that in four weeks I had absorbed the necessary knowledge and was put on a train for the battlefront, being one of four hun-

dred who were going up as relief for those who had been in action for some time.

The scene, as we left, was as if we were going on a holiday instead of to the stern and grim realities of war. It was all new to us. We could not realize what was in front of us. All the inhabitants of the town turned out to cheer us on our way. We were a jolly lot, skylarking and singing as we waved farewell to the people of Wesel. As we proceeded through Cologne we were singing. The people along the route seemed cheerful. We still were.

What a change there was, though, when we came into Belgium. For the first time, then it dawned on us, that we were not on a pleasure jaunt. As we got our first glimpse of that ravaged and devastated country, as if a command had been given, a sudden hush fell over the train. New thoughts were born within this group that only a few short hours ago had been boisterously cheerful. We were getting our first ideas what autocracy was doing to destroy happiness.

All along the route we saw little villages which only a short while before had been the homes of happy, simple-minded folk. These were blotted out. Tiny houses were smashed and tumbled down in scarred and twisted wreckage. Stations were crumbled about as if by the hand of some cruel giant who had wantonly destroyed and revelled in his destruction. We came into Louvain at mid-day. The troop trains were travelling very slowly. Some times for hours we were held up. At night everything was in pitch darkness. Louvain was a nightmare. What horrible sights greeted the eye all about! This once beautiful city was a mass of tangled, jumbled-up ruins. There were no more smiles; there was little talk but there was lots of nervousness and serious thinking. There was a tone of tensity pervading the four hundred. Actual war conditions were being impressed forcibly on us. Everyone realized that we were not on our way to an afternoon tea or for a holiday journey into a strange country.

Disabled and back to Germany

TT was pitiable to see the poor little Belgian children and old folks coming up to us as we stopped, trying to sell fruits and wines. Orders had been given to purchase nothing as the Belgians had poisoned the food and drink. Most of us longed for a stimulant to arouse our depressed spirits and we stealthily smuggled wine purchased from the villagers along the way aboard the train. We discovered that nothing had been poisoned. Our journey seemed endless. Time after time we were ordered to halt and take cover in the open fields nearby to baffle any lurking air raiders. All along the route to the front we saw the old men of the Landsturm who were guarding the rails, lonesome and forgotten. They were a good deal better off than we were going to be. There was nothing for them to do except eat and sleep. In those days Germany was rich in food and they received many parcels of delicacies. Their tours of duty were not arduous but very monotonous.

Silence, oppressive and sombre, hung over the country like a mourning pall. The only exciting moments were when we heard the whir of an enemy airplane and the signal came to make for the fields. We arrived at our destination, Don, forty-eight hours after leaving Wesel and there we had the

first sight of the enemy.

This was a group of 100 British prisoners who were being led into this little town by a group of Krefeld Hussars. It was a cold day in October and the Britons had nothing with them but their trench clothes. They wore woolen caps. As they passed through a line of German soldiers one rough fellow stole a cap from an unfortunate Briton. This aroused my ire and I remonstrated with the Landsturmer for his heartlessness and wanton act. It was poor sportsmanship, to say the least. In spite of the fact that I was a German and going to fight

against the British and the French I had seen a lot of the world and the palpable unfairness of the petty performance aroused my indignation.

This burly German who was evidently uneducated and of the low class called me a damn fool and gave me a lecture. "Wait till you get to the front," he said. "Possibly you will have different ideas if you ever get back again." This little incident rankled in my bosom. As the two of us were arguing the order came to fall in.

We were destined for Aubers, where we were to act as relief troops for the Fifty-seventh. After a march of an hour and a half we came to a field where there was a huge hay-stack. This was the point where we were to meet the regimental officer who was to take command of us in place of the transport officer.

While we were at Don we could hear the distant rumble of battle. We were now within range of the French artillery. It was here that we were to receive our baptism of fire. You would not think it possible to have any humorous thoughts under the conditions.

Presently the officer came up riding on horseback and signalling with his riding crop, he ordered the men to fall in. Just as he did a shrapnel shell burst not more than fifty yards away from the band of soldiers. What happened then was to me very funny. The sight of a bursting shell was no novelty to me, for I had been in Lisbon during the revolution when King Manuel was deposed and I had experienced the sensation of being under fire.

When the shell burst the recruits scurried about in ludicrous fashion, like a lot of frightened rats and in a moment not one of them was to be seen. The officer stormed at the men as only a Prussian leader can. He might just as well have been talking to so many mummies. I stood up and watched the shell burst and the officer. "Cowards," he shouted. "Assemble, assemble," but there was no assembling by this panic-stricken group. Finally he managed to get the men into some semblance of order and off they went on their way to the

mysterious zone of battle. It was not long before the soldiers paid for their show of cowardice

We were not due for our billets in the trenches until the next morning, but the officer was so enraged that we were hurried up without a bit of delay, or without the night's rest that was due us. That evening we were sent to our respective stations and were in the trenches at nine o'clock.

I showed the letter I had from Ober Lieutenant von Hahnke, of the Wesel headquarters, to Major Wilfing, the battalion commander, and when he read it he took me in front of my comrades in arms and told them of how I had come all the way from South Africa, incurring many dangers, to fight for the Fatherland. He seemed greatly pleased and put me up as an example to the rest.

Just before we left for the trenches a call was made for volunteers to perform a dangerous patrol in No Man's Land. I shouted out "Here" and this further pleased the commander. With three others I was ordered to leave the trench at midnight, to seek information about the barbed wire barriers of the enemy.

War was coming to us now with great suddenness. There was heavy firing on both sides no sooner than we were at our stations. One incident that struck me as a bit funny and which is worthy of relating here to show how some act in their first time under fire was staged with my neighbor as the actor. He was a little chap, the son of a farmer. He was nearly scared to death as the whizz of the bullets sang their song of death over the trenches. We had to keep our heads just above the top, so that we could see the sights of our rifles. The bullets were zipping uncomfortably close to us. Wilhelm kept his head down and was popping away at the inky sky. The company commander saw him wasting all this good lead and ordered him to get right up on top with his whole body exposed to the British fire. This strenuous treatment had a salutary effect on Wilhelm. It knocked some of the cowardice out of him and he developed into a cool fighter after this incident.

At midnight we went out on our patrol, worming our way over No Man's Land until we encountered the barbed wire. Then we crawled back, carefully measuring the distance between this barrier and our trenches. Pleased with the report of the patrol the commander made me company's courier the next morning. We were in the trenches in 24-hour shifts. There were plenty of potatoes in France at that time and we used to roast them at night. There was enough food to keep us in good condition. There were no storm attacks. Neither side advanced. Most of the firing was done at night. the time we were living in suspense. We had made the trenches very comfortable and home-like. There were chairs and stoves and beds which were the loot from the deserted homes. There were even some antiques to brighten up the trenches. Aubers was a well-to-do community and in the German trenches might be found silk-covered hair mattresses. War did not seem to be such a serious proposition after all. So far it was not, but it was a different thing later on. We remained about a month at Aubers, when we were ordered to the adjoining trench which was near the Pietre Mill. There had been few casualties. Only the foolhardy who would take a chance in going over the top of the trenches to save time in getting to the field kitchens were potted by random shots what the Germans called "blindgaenger."

When we arrived at the Pietre trench it was early in December. Snow had fallen and it was bitterly cold. Between the hostile trenches all was wrapped in a coverlet of white. Halfway between the two trenches we could see through field-glasses the body of a dead soldier. Orders were given by the battalion commander to find out at any cost just what troops were facing us. I volunteered to make the trip to get the information.

The commander asked me how I expected to do it. I explained that if I were given a couple of white sheets and a rope painted white I thought I could make my way over the snow without being discovered by the enemy. These were furnished and in the night which was fairly bright from the light of the half moon I wriggled inch by inch over the snow until I was able to attach the rope to the legs of the body and thus we were able to drag it back stealthily to our trenches. When

the body was searched the pay-book of the dead soldier was in the pocket of his coat and then we knew just what troops were opposed to us. A squad of four was detailed to dig a grave behind the German trenches and the unfortunate lad was buried there.

Up to this time my health had never failed me. I caught a cold on this patrol and had a slight attack of rheumatism. The battalion to which I was attached was ordered to proceed to La Bassee, but I was obliged to stay behind for five days at a field hospital. Incoming wounded soldiers told of how the big push on La Bassee was to be launched on December 22. There was only an interval of 24 hours before this important move. I asked the doctor in charge for permission to join my regiment, for I was feeling all right. This was granted. reached La Bassee on the afternoon of December 21. I was eager to see a big attack. In the La Bassee trenches we were up to our necks in water and our clothing seemed to weigh as much as our bodies. My legs and arms began to swell up and I could hardly move. I saw what I had come all the way from South Africa to see. As courier it was not part of my duty to join in an attack. I was stationed right beside the company commander and as fate had it he was the first one to be killed in our sector, being struck by one of the "hat shots." Our company numbered 300 as it went into action. By the next morning there were more than 200 casualties. I was helped by some of the slightly wounded to get back to the rear. I could hardly walk. All now had a graphic close-up view of the horrible gruesomeness of this futile business of war. It was weird and harrowing to watch the wounded making their way through the communication trenches to the rear. The bodies of the men were encased in mud that had frozen to the uniforms. If one tried to escape the icy water in the trenches communicating with the rear he had to go out in the open and faced the possibility of being picked off by a sharpshooter. Many took the chance, however. It surely was a case of being between the devil and the deep sea. I managed, in spite of my pain to make my way through the water in imminent danger of being drowned if I stumbled. I used my rifle as

a crutch on one side and was assisted by another member of our company on the other. I was placed in one of those single French carts with one horse. I could not move and for a time I thought I was going right back into the British lines. This horse was a native of the country and he apparently did not like his German surroundings, so he took it into his head to make a dash for his allies' lines. He ran away, breaking the harness and leaping out of the shafts. There I was left stranded in the road, while the horse was making a mad dash for the British position. I was helpless and if the harness had held he might have taken me a prisoner over to the enemy. I was in such a mood then, though, that I did not much care what happened to me. All afternoon I lay on the road until this rattle-brained Prussian came back with another car and took me to the first-aid hospital at La Bassee. My body was so swollen that my frozen clothing had to be cut from me. I was kept at this station for 24 hours, when I was transferred to Marquilles. This was the Field Lazarette of the Seventh Army Corps. Here I lay a month, unable to move arms or legs, and had to be fed like a helpless baby. I was then passed back to Don, the transferring station for the Krieg's Lazarette at Douai. For 24 hours I was lying at Don waiting for the train, with a high fever and helpless. My neighbor on the adjoining stretcher was an English Tommy with a bullet through his right arm. He was in great agony, but he brightened up when I addressed him in English and presented him with some cigarettes. He complained of ill-treatment by the soldiers so far, but it made him feel a little better to have an opportunity to converse in his native tongue once more. We chatted of places in his home country that were familiar to both of us. I explained to him that I had lived fourteen years in the Transvaal and that this was no personal fight of mine. I told him that I loved the English, but that I was compelled to fight for Germany, for after all it was my native land, and I was doing the same thing for my country that he was doing for his.

His train left before mine and we shook hands, wishing each other a quick recovery and good luck. He was on his way to Germany and a short time after I was bound for Douai. At

the latter place I had my first sight of a woman nurse. Previously the incapacitated were taken care of by soldiers of the sanitary division. For three weeks I was practically motionless and was eventually forced to subsist on liquid food because my jaws had swollen up. I was then despatched to Nurnberg by a hospital train where I was placed in a lazarette at Ludwigsfeld. The winter was nearly over before I was able to limp about with the aid of crutches. I was advised by the doctor in charge of my case to go back to my regiment at Wesel and make application for my discharge, as I would never be able to go back into active service. When I reached Wesel I found that Hauptman Klarmayer was still in command of the station. He told me that my battalion had been transferred to Emmerich, half an hour distant from the Dutch border. No train was to leave for four hours, so I took advantage of the opportunity to visit headquarters to look up my old acquaintance, Von Hahnke. I met one of his aides who was there in the days when I first reached Wesel. He told me that Von Hahnke had been promoted to captaincy in the Prussian Guards and that he had fallen in battle in Flanders. Captain-Lieutenant Freyer, a naval officer, was now in command and I was given a note of introduction to him by the aide.

I explained to him about how I had come to Wesel originally and of the letter that the consul at Rotterdam had despatched to Von Hahnke. He expressed sorrow for my condition and told me to go back to Emmerich to recuperate. I arrived there on a Sunday and every one was out enjoying himself. One of my first experiences of ingratitude came when the thanks I received for my siege at the front was three days' detention under guard for overstaying leave for one hour. This was one of the seeds of disgust with German militarism which was sowed in my bosom, a seed which was destined to be augmented by many more in the next few months.

For the first time in many weeks I was beginning to feel almost like a human being again. The hospital at Emmerich was in charge of Catholic sisters and the attentions received there could not have been better. All the patients were treated with the utmost consideration and kindness and everyone had the best of food. To add insult to injury the heartless com-

mandant had me transferred to the war hospital at Wesel, where he was also in charge and where the food and treatment were of a very bad nature.

My feelings were now rapidly undergoing a change. Like most others who had been born in Germany I was saturated with the spirit of autocracy from my earliest recollections. Things were changing in my mind now. I was swiftly realizing the unfairness, the injustice of the Prussian mode of thought. Here was I, who had dared to come all the way from South Africa and who had baffled the British and had furnished valuable information to the Germans, treated as if I were an enemy. At Emmerich there was a junior officer, Sholten, who was a subordinate to Dr. Grassman, who was in charge of the hospitals at Emmerich and Wesel. Sholten was coarse in nature, a brute. He had the heart of a flunkey, although he was a man of education and lived in refined surroundings in peace-times. He was one of those cowardly creatures, though, who feared to go to the front and through his connections he was able to receive an appointment where he would not be in danger.

When I was sent to Wesel Dr. Grassman issued orders that my food should be restricted. This made me furious after all I had done, but it was nothing to what Grassman did to the prisoners of war who had incurred his displeasure.

At Wesel hospital the sick French and British prisoners were allowed to walk in the beautiful gardens which surrounded the hospital. I was confined for three days to my room and on my first trip out I encountered a British captain and lieutenant. The captain was badly wounded in the arm and the lieutenant had both of his legs off and was walking with the aid of artificial limbs. I noticed that wherever they went there was always a soldier a couple of feet behind them, although they were in a helpless condition. I was curious and asked the guard in German what the reason was for guarding them so closely.

He told me that the lieutenant had tried to explain in English to Grassman, who could not understand that he needed some new clothing. The captain smiled when Grassman failed

to understand and for this piece of lese majeste the pompous Prussian issued an order that the two unhappy Britons be placed in solitary confinement for fourteen days with nothing but bread and water to sustain them, except on one day a week, when they were given a meal. Grassman considered that his dignity had been insulted and he made the helpless Britons pay for a harmless smile. I learned this all when I held a clandestine conversation with the two of them with the permission of the guard, for they were not allowed to speak to any one.

The Britons were pleased when I spoke to them in their native tongue. I asked them if I could do anything for them and then they told me that they would dearly like to have a whiff at a cigarette or a pipe. This I furnished them. They had been cooped up for eight days in "solitary" before they were even allowed the privilege of taking a bit of fresh air. I could not see the justice of such a proceeding. Grassman was just one of the type of German which has made the world hate Prussianism. He wasn't a fighter, either, and I was bitter to think that such a person could be in a position where he was able to make those suffer whom he should have been treating with every kindness if he had really had the instincts of a human heart. I was taking a chance, myself, of being confined once more for speaking to the Britons. I cared little, however. I was sincerely sorry for them. After a short chat I returned to my room and it was not long before I witnessed another scene that made my blood boil, and oh, how I wished I were in a position to do something of benefit.

A hospital transport train had just arrived and aboard it were four score, either wounded or prisoners, to be transferred to the internment camp at Friedrichsfeld. There was just one Briton in the lot. All the rest were French, with the exception of an ugly-looking black Morrocan, one of the French colonial troops.

The sergeant-major in charge of the arrangements gave an order that cigarettes might be served to the prisoners. I noticed, though, that the lonesome Briton was not included. I being the only German there who could speak English was

allowed to interrogate the Englishman. The sergeant-major made him sit in the same wheelchair with the black man, while all the others were sent away. This poor lad had been badly wounded in both legs. He told me that he had been in nearly every hospital in France and Belgium for six months and was just about recovering. I could feel tears almost coming to my eyes when I realized the brutality of the action of that sergeant-major in depriving this helpless chap of the small comfort of a smoke and furthermore humbling him by forcing him to be the companion of the Morrocan. He was a nice, clean-cut boy, evidently of a good family, and in the eyes of the Germans this was a good joke on him, to make him the partner of the black man.

The sergeant-major insisted that the English were the ones who brought the colored men into the war and that they were equals. I tried to explain to him that this man was a French colonial. He sneered at me. This was the time when the slogan of the Germans was "Gott Strafe England." As all but the two were led away the soldiers jeered and laughed at the plight of the unfortunate Briton. It tickled their low sense of humor. It was a contemptible piece of business. Such a petty thing was not going to help Germany. What did the "strafing" of one man mean in a war of millions?

Incidents like this were making me grow more bitter every day. Hatred of Prussian militarism was growing apace. That first seed which was cast into my soul in the hospital at Emmerich was beginning to ripen and it was eventually to bear a poisonous crop for Germany.

Whatever became of this ill-assorted pair I don't know. The last I saw of them they were to be sent to another hospital not far from the big lazarette where we were quartered. My last sight of them was watching the negro puffing contentedly at a cigarette while the poor white lad was forced to sit idly by in the wheelchair. Perhaps the echoes of "Gott Strafe England" were ringing in his ears and I could not help but think that maybe running around in his brain were the words, "God damn Germany."

Bitter thoughts were adding up fast. My heart was sore.

Germany, my native land, was rapidly fading out of my life. The thought of those three days' imprisonment for an offense that should have been condoned because it was done innocently, filled my soul with hatred for the system of the Kaiser. Every moment I was growing stronger and stronger in my determination to cast off forever the yoke of Prussianism. I was fully determined now that just as soon as I could find my way clear I would go to Holland and remain in that neutral country for the duration of the war, providing nothing else turned up to change my plans.

My chance to get out of the clutches of Grassman who could vent his animus against me by keeping me for months in the hospital if he so desired came sooner than I expected. I was lying in my bed, day dreaming, thinking back to my happy days with the English in the Transvaal and assuring myself more and more that I had no fight with them. I was wondering if I had been right in coming back to do battle against them. They had been my friends and I was now regretting that I was an enemy of theirs. As I was in a half doze, the door of my room opened and an orderly from the office of Captain-Lieutenant Freyer entered with a message.

For the first time in many a day my spirits rose when I saw the letter with the seal of the Imperial Headquarters stamped on it. I felt then that at last I was on the way to be a free agent and to get away from that hateful hospital with that petty tyrant, Grassman, the moulder of my destiny. The letter was from Captain-Lieutenant Freyer and he asked me if I wanted to take a commission to go to Rotterdam in the intelligence department of the Imperial government. I could hardly restrain my emotions. I knew now that I was on my way to freedom.

Autocracy was to be put behind me now; democracy was before me.

I immediately gave a favorable reply. Grassman, still of a viperous nature, was trying to balk me. His vicious soul called for revenge. He, though, was the one who was balked. I was obliged to undergo an examination and one of the underdoctors who looked me over pronounced me well enough to

undertake the journey. I was still a bit weak and in pain, walking on crutches, but at any cost I was determined to get across the border into Holland. Grassman did not want to let me go, but the orders of Freyer were more important than anything he could say or do and reluctantly he allowed me to visit Freyer at headquarters.

I felt then that I held the winning hand. German Imperial Headquarters' orders superseded all others. So I went over to Freyer's office guarded by a sergeant, this still showing the animosity of Grassman. I was granted a private interview with Freyer and he told me that I could go to Holland immediately, and that all I would have to do would be to use my knowledge of languages in Rotterdam and that I would not have to do any outdoor work until my condition improved, if it ever would. I lost no time in accepting the proposition and the following day I received my discharge from the hospital with the papers which gave me permission to go to Emmerich, where my battalion was now stationed.

I was obliged to go back to my company to report before I could get regimental leave. I was happy to be once more in civilian clothes. I had my old Scotch riding-suit with me which I had always considered lucky. As I reported to the sergeant-major at Emmerich he demanded to know why I was not in the field uniform. He would not listen to me when I told him that I had been given permission from headquarters to change and ordered me back into the gray which had become so distasteful to me.

This state of affairs lasted only six hours, however, for I lost no time in getting into communication with Freyer's office at Wesel and I was permitted to change back into the garb of a civilian.

On reporting to my superior officer I was told that I had to serve three days' imprisonment. Grassman again. He was still trying to use his venom against me. I insisted that I was not in physical condition to do this. I was sent to one of the doctors and as fate decreed my examiner was the doctor who had examined me on my arrival from South Africa. He

appeared glad to see that I had returned safely from the front. I explained to him how the spiteful nature of Grassman was responsible for my predicament. He was fair enough to agree with me that I was in no condition to do my three days' imprisonment. Then I returned to my battalion commander and was given a release. With this I returned to Wesel and was permitted to journey on to Holland.



VI.

Going to Holland in the Imperial Secret Service

ITH my credentials from my battalion commander I hastened to Wesel and reported to Captain-Lieutenant Freyer. The following morning he took me to the police commandant of the town with special instructions to be given a passport as a newspaper correspondent for Rotterdam. I was given a generous expense account from the government and at noon I left Wesel for Rotterdam. I was not sorry to leave. My instructions were to report to Captain Vollardt at Rotterdam, who was in charge of the German espionage service in Holland.

That evening when I arrived in Rotterdam I took an apartment at the Hotel Commons and telephoned to Captain Vollardt over a private wire, the number of which had been given to me by Freyer before I left Wesel. I was instructed to report at nine o'clock the following morning to start my work in the espionage work.

Promptness is one of the essentials of the Prussian life. I was on time as I rode up into the Claacs de Vrieslam, the smart residential district of Rotterdam. I rode a couple of squares beyond the house that I knew was my destination and then walked back. I was taken a bit by surprise when a little girl of about twelve years walked down the stoop and came up to me.

She said: "Are you Mr. Meyers?" I replied in the affirmative, and she invited me to come in to see Captain Vollardt.

The place was luxuriously furnished. I was ushered in to the reception room, where I was greeted by several high

German officials in civilian clothing. There was a complete telephone equipment and the chief of the service was a woman whom I afterward discovered was the wife of a Prussian officer who was a prisoner in Russia.

Captain Vollardt took me aside and gave me my instructions. The general belief was that all wire connections between Holland and Germany had been severed. What was my surprise, then, when the telephone bell rang and I heard the operator ask if Captain-Lieutenant Freyer was on the other end. The reply was apparently in the affirmative and for nearly an hour she read off from a long typed sheet details of vessels that were sailing from Holland ports. She was giving to the headquarters at Wesel news of the time of departure, the quality and quantity of the cargoes and the leading news from the English and French papers, all of which items had been collected by the Germans in the employ of the widely spread secret service. I was just a bit astonished. German thoroughness and efficiency, futile as things have turned out, were impressed on my mind.

Bitter as I was before I was doubly so now. I could visualize ships being sunk by the German submarines and innocent souls being blotted out. I could imagine my own mother, my sister, some one near and dear to me being shot down into the depths of the ocean without reason. Germany had treated me badly. She had treated other sons of hers the same way and I could recall hundreds of cases of desertion. I had come into Holland inflamed against the Prussian military system because of my treatment by that dog, Grassman. I harked back to my happy days in the Transvaal when I was a friend of the Britons and they were friends of mine. I hated myself to think that I had gone to fight for Germany. I was determined now more than ever that I was going to make amends for my activity in the Prussian cause. Henceforth my trail led back to South Africa. I wanted to square things with my conscience. That came later. I did.

Discipline is the first thing that the German boy learns. He must always obey his superiors. I had been used to doing this, but for the first time in my life I changed my mode of thinking.

At soul now I was a revolutionist against autocracy. No longer was I going to be the vassal of a thick-headed officer. I was in civilian clothes and I was wise enough to know that military orders need not be obeyed if I did not care to do so. Furthermore I was in a neutral country and considered myself safe.

Vollardt requested me to change my quarters from the Commons to the Hotel Poppel, which was managed by a German who was a close friend of those at the consulate. At the Commons there were many French and British and he did not want me to mingle with them. I shifted my quarters, but it was the last time I obeyed his orders. I was once more seized with a violent attack of rheumatism when he called me at my room and insisted that I must go to Wesel on a special mission.

I answered that I could not possibly travel, but he said that the best of care would be taken of me and that I would be conveyed there in comfort. I was suspicious that he was plotting to get me back to that hospital which had so many hateful memories to keep me there where I would be harmless.

He did not like my attitude toward him. I could realize that. He knew that I was aware of the meeting-place of the German spies in the tea-rooms and cafes of Rotterdam. He saw that I was just doing routine work and that there was no great willingness about what I was doing. I was not paying him the deference that the others in service were and that autocratic spirit of the Prussian superior rebelled and sought revenge. He wanted to get rid of me and when I told him of my illness he was suspicious that I had an ulterior motive. I was sure that he had an idea that I was mixing with the French and British. I was not worried. I knew where I stood. I was now the master of my conscience. I was penitent. I wanted to atone for what I had done against the English.

I refused to go to Wesel.

He tried to bulldoze me with the usual Prussian methods. I told him that I cared nothing for his orders, that Captain-Lieutenant Freyer was the person from whom I was to take

orders and that he was nothing to me. I added that I would report to Freyer at Wesel in writing.

That night I wrote to Freyer, telling of my situation. I was powerless, sick and despondent. In the morning when I lay in bed two couriers came from Freyer. Vollardt had unquestionably communicated with him by telephone. Freyer had heard things before of other men who had been sent to Vollardt who had trouble and he wrote me a very nice letter, telling me to come on into Germany and he would have me se nt to the baths at Raffelberg. I was in a quandary as to what I should do. I felt that I was under his orders and I was in such pain at the time that I felt that it would be the best thing for me to do. I hated to get back again into Germany, but I was sure that they would never keep me there.

Much as my mind was against going back to Germany I accepted Freyer's orders, or you might call it request, and before I could get out of my pajamas, the two couriers who had brought the message had my luggage all packed and in no time I was on my way back to Germany.



VII.

Under Suspicion of being pro-Ally and sent back to Germany

SHORTLY after noon I arrived in Wesel with the two couriers and was escorted to the Imperial Headquarters. Right away I became suspicious when I noted that the couriers preceded me into Captain-Lieutenant Freyer's private chambers. I figured that some secret message was to be delivered by them from Vollardt. I was certain of this when I came face to face with him. The difference between Freyer and Vollardt was a marked one. Freyer was a polished gentleman, an aristocrat in his bearing, while Vollardt was a gruff and rather uncouth person lacking in the finer sensibilities. Freyer's greeting to me did not seem to be any too cordial after his conference with the couriers.

I could see by his expression that he was not the warm friend or admirer of me that he had been in days gone by. I was in civilian clothing, but he was still my superior officer and I stood at attention as he spoke in a solemn and measured tone. It was as if a justice was passing sentence on a criminal. There was an atmosphere of gravity in the situation and forebodings of further troubles were in my mind.

"I have heard from Vollardt," he said, "that there were differences of opinion between you. Of course this is not the first time that such a thing has happened. There have been several men who were in the secret service in Holland who had the same experience. The custom has been to keep these persons in detention for the duration of the war. I realize what you did for the Fatherland by the valuable information you gave us. Remember, though, that this is war and the sternest sort of measures must be taken."

"I will make an exception in your case," he added. "I will permit you to go back to the hospital here, for I see that you are still greatly in need of medical aid. According to routine, however, you will have to be reassigned to your old regiment. When this is complied with, I will see to it that you are transferred to the baths at Raffelberg."

It was a blow to me to think that once more I should be forced to submit to the orders of Grassman. I was helpless, though, now. I knew I was in for some more sorry days. A courier was sent to the lazarette to obtain my uniform and within two hours I was back in the gray that I was learning to despise more and more every hour. Once more I was a soldier in the ranks of despotism. When I was in my uniform Freyer sent for me. He bade farewell to me with a hearty handshake and wished me a speedy recovery.

His parting words, though, were ominous. "Remember," he said, "that what you have seen and heard are secret. Silence is golden. Take my advice and speak of nothing that you have learned in Holland or in any other place that you were on your way here. Keep it clearly in your mind that if you violate this secrecy you are subject to court martial.

"You know what the penalty is in war-time for divulging anything that may be of use to the enemy or which may help to create discord among your fellow-soldiers." I assured him that I knew what the end would be. My years of service in the secret service in South Africa had taught me when to keep my mouth shut. I wasn't going to be foolish enough to be caught by gossiping. I was wondering a lot, though, of just how I was going to frustrate what I realized now was a well-laid plan to keep me practically a prisoner until the war was over.

Luckily when I arrived at Grassman's Festung's Lazarette he was not there. He was off on leave for a couple of days and before he returned I was shipped off to Raffelburg.

The Raffelburg baths had been turned into a rest hospital. Before the war it had been a favorite resort for those who were suffering from rheumatism or gout and was conducted by a

Swiss whose wife was a Belgian. It was a resort now where volunteer nurses from the best class of society were in attendance. The chief nurse was the wife of the leading lawyer of Duisburg, which was nearby.

She questioned me, as she was quite interested when she learned that I was the only member of the Fifty-seventh who had been sent there. I told her of how I had made the trip from South Africa to join the colors and that night I was invited to take a place at her table for dinner. I was nicknamed "The Afrikaner."

The story was spread about among the nurses and the following day the Belgian woman, wife of the proprietor, who had heard of what I had gone through, invited me to come and have luncheon with her. In my conversation with her it did not take me long to discover that she was in favor of the Allies. She was married to a Swiss with German ancestry, but I found out that she was not very loyal to him. He was wealthy and was of the temperament that was not bound down by home ties. He was of the kind that likes the club and the society of other women more than his wife. He preferred the butterfly existence. His wife was a woman who loved her home. There was a big difference in their ideas of the conventionalities. The two were incompatible, I soon learned, and here I instinctively felt that I had made a discovery that was going to be of use to me.

I had become popular enough in the lazarette, but there was always with me a haunting suspicion that I was there for a purpose. I was only an atom in the world war, still the thoroughness of the autocratic system of Prussian militarism was watching me as closely as if I had bene a regiment of the enemy.

The baths were surrounded by a beautiful park where the convalescents were permitted to walk. I was strolling along under the trees. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, a time when practically all of the patients were taking a siesta. The thunder of cannon still boomed in my ears. I could not forget those days at La Bassee. I sought a spot where I might

watching me as closely as if I had been a regiment of the roar of bursting shells the sweet chatter of the birds was heard. I thought I was alone, but off in the distance at a window, looking out and possibly filled with thoughts of her own was Mrs. Jeanne, the wife of the proprietor. She could see me, although I was not aware of it. There must have been some telepathic connection between us two. The wireless of two disturbed souls was working in accord. She was lonesome; I was lonesome. There were different reasons, to be sure, but our minds were in tune to each other.

While I was sitting on a bench, looking out into space, trying to figure out what was coming to me in the days that were before me, I was tapped on the shouler. I started up and saw beside me Mme. Jeanne. She looked around and placed a finger to her lips. "Hush," she said, "I have something to tell you that I think will be of interest to you."

I was all attention, then. "I have learned," she told me, "that you are under surveillance."

"Promise me, will you, that you will not disclose your source of information, if I tell you this?"

I assured her that I would.

Then she related of how her husband in a garrulous moment had confided to her that I was under suspicion and that I was to be watched every moment. She said that a letter had been sent from Freyer with an order that I must be under close observation all the time. I asked where her husband had received his information.

She told me that the chief of staff of the hospital had in an unguarded moment told her husband, probably because he did not like the attentions which were being bestowed on me.

This information was a matter of great importance to me. Oh, how I hated the German system now. I realized that there was no sense of gratitude. Everyone who was in the fighting line was just an atom to be engulfed by the whim of

the Emperor. I was just one of those atoms and I was going to be obliterated if occasion demanded. I said that I would verify her statement.

She asked me how. I told her that I would do it in a way of my own and that her name would never be mentioned. "They can kill me," I assured her, "before I shall ever mention your name."

Training in the secret service teaches one to be cautious. never to act on impulse. I had learned in my days in Transvaal that it is a safe thing to sleep over a thought. The following morning always brings a more sober and sane view of what you may have jumped at in the first place. I pondered over what she had told me and that night I went to bed, restless for some time, but finally sinking off into a sound sleep. I couldn't help dreaming of the events of the last few days.

In the morning I went to see the chief of staff who had told Jeanne of my predicament. When I came into his office he assumed the same gruff attitude that I was becoming accustomed to. He was very lofty and stern in his greeting. He acted towards me as if I were some clod that should not be in the presence of such an austere personage.

"What do you want?" he growled.

"I want to see you in private," I replied in a voice that showed no temerity.

He appeared somewhat surprised and dismissed his secretary. Then I launched out at him.

"How is it," I said, "that you should have told some one that Captain-Lieutenant Freyer had sent a letter from Wesel ordering that I be placed under close observation during my stay here in Raffelburg?"

"What are you talking about?" he answered.

"I know what I am talking about," I said. "Furthermore you ought to have sense enough to realize that you have vio-

lated a military secret by talking to a civilian. In fact you even went as far as to tell this to a neutral."

"You told Mr. Jeanne of my circumstances and if I wish to report this to Captain-Lieutenant Freyer you know what it will mean to you—prison for the rest of the war at least and possibly a worse fate."

He knew he was trapped. He dropped his mask and shook hands with me as he apologized. He assured me that what had happened would be a secret. He became very kind to me then. He told me that I was under orders to be confined to the grounds, but that on his own responsibility he would grant me a pass to leave the grounds and visit Duisburg, Mulheim or Dusseldorf as I wished. Into my mind then came the thought that I had an opening to escape from Germany and to be forever rid of that crushing heel of autocracy.

The first chance I had I took a trip to Dusseldorf and had a pleasant time visiting the shops. I was particularly interested in going through the places where maps were on sale. My plans were made. I wanted to get the lay of the land, for I was determined to leave Germany behind me forever. In one of the shops I found what I wanted. Remember the war was still in its infancy and Germany was still confident of success. There was no ban then on the sale of maps, and I was able to secure one.

Not even in my boyhood days did I study geography as I did in the next few days. I had enough sense to know that I was going to be returned to my old regiment at Emmerich and probably to be sent back to the front to be slaughtered. I was not afraid of going into action once more, but I was now in a mood where I did not want to fight against the Allies. I considered myself like the Christmas goose which is fattened up for the banquet. The system was making me healthy again to be cannon fodder.

It was not long before I was able to walk without the aid of crutches. I felt fine. The chief doctor looked me over and despatched me on to the old regiment to which I had been attached at Emmerich.

By this time I think I knew every inch of land between Paris and Rotterdam. I had studied the map carefully. I was already familiar with the country in the vicinity of Emmerich and I was planning that the first opportunity that was afforded me I would be on my way to Holland. Possibly I was a bit confident, but I always held to the idea that confidence was a big item in the road to success.

This battalion at Emmerich was filling up day after day with new reservists. The Fifty-seventh was being recruited, as it was always during the conflict, up to war strength by men who had been at the front. It was one of the crack regiments. The Sixth Company, to which I was detailed, was composed mostly of men who had been wounded in action, or who had been suffering from illness, but who were now in pretty good physical condition.

In the German army there is a distinction between the men in the ranks. The upper class is not on the same basis with the laborer as he is in the American army. I was entitled, because of my station in life before war, to sleep in private quarters.

When I reported to my commander he told me that I must go with the rabble. He told me that orders had been received to that effect. I was still suffering from the rheumatism and thought it cruel that I should be forced to live in the draughty barracks with the other soldiers.

I refused to sleep there, explaining that my health would not permit me to remain in such an icy place.

"You refuse to obey the order?" he said.

"I have never refused an order yet," I replied. "I simply can't execute it."

It was a coincidence that just a year had elapsed since I was wallowing about the La Bassee trenches. It was now three days before Christmas of 1915 and once more it looked as if there would be no merry Yuletide for me.

The company commander knew that I was quibbling over words. There was no distinction in his mind between a point

blank refusal to obey an order and being unable to execute one. It was up to him to make me suffer and he was going to do it.

"I am not refusing," I said. "I told you that my health is in such a state that I simply can't comply with your request for the present."

"We'll attend to that," he replied. I knew what was to happen then and my brain was working fast. In two or three hours I was called before the chief of personnel of the battalion. Meanwhile my mind was made up that I was to be on my way to Holland just as soon as the opportunity afforded.

When I came before this officer who had charge of the cases that were liable to court martial, he repeated what my commander had told him.

"You refuse to obey the order given by your superior officer in war time?"

I was independent then. My plans were all arranged.

"Yes, I refuse," I answered him. "I have been tricked and deceived long enough and I am prepared to fight my case with those in supreme authority."

"All right, if that is satisfactory to you, there is no need of further argument."

"You start for Essen Monday morning, at nine o'clock. I suppose you realize what that means? Goodbye."

With this curt dismissal, back I went to my company headquarters. I was ordered to sleep in the barracks that night and soon learned that I was under strict observation and was not to be allowed any of the privileges that the others had. I was to be kept in close confinement until I was sent on my way to Essen.

All that night I lay awake. My brain was in a turmoil. I was thinking of how to get away from this hateful system forever. At regular intervals in the night the officer of the guard came in and looked me over to see that I was still present.

Sundays were given over to the men for recreation. They were permitted to go to an amusement resort which was about half way between Emmerich and the Dutch frontier. It was one of those amusement halls or beer-gardens which are so common to Germany. I was not among those who were granted the privilege of spending a few hours there.

In the Prussian army one of the first things that is done in the daily routine is for the officer of the day to ask if anyone reports ill. If he does it is a hard and fast rule that he must be sent to the surgeon in charge for examination and if he is found to be in poor physical condition he is allowed to remain in the "revier stube." This practically amounts to what is in America an observation ward. From this place the ill are despatched to other hospitals according to the nature of their cases.

At the roll-call I reported sick and was despatched to the observation ward. Luck was still with me for the doctor in charge was the man who had examined me when I first arrived in Emmerich. He recalled my adventures in getting into Germany from South Africa and was still friendly toward me. In fact there was a very warm corner in his heart for me. He was a real man, one that was a cosmopolitan by nature and not one of those dull, brutish Prussians who had been fed so much on autocracy that they could thing of nothing else than the dictates of the Kaiser.

I explained my situation to him. I told him how I felt and what a crisis there was before me. I impressed on him that I would need all the strength I could muster to be in a suitable position to face the courtmartial at Essen and requested him to let me stay at the "revier-stube" until Monday morning, when I must depart for that town.

He was a sympathetic man and he realized that I had been badly dealt with. He gave me the requisite permission and once more I began to feel a bit cheerful. I was well aware of the fact that the guarding of the hospital was rather lax as compared to that of the barracks. I figured that if I were allowed to remain there I would have a fair chance to escape from the bonds of despotism.

When I arrived in Emmerich I had taken the precaution to hire private quarters in case of emergency. There I had left my civilian accoutrements. This move proved very valuable.

Below the "revier-stube" was a beer hall. In charge of the ward was a petty officer who could see no reason why he should not enjoy a little time off when most of the men he was supposed to guard were apparently safe.

So far everything was breaking nicely for me, and I could not help but laugh at how the vaunted Prussian system of thoroughness and efficiency in militarism was going to be thwarted by just one common, ordinary soldier. Maybe this sounds conceited, but it was confidence and there is mighty little difference between conceit and confidence.



VIII.

My Desertion from the Prussian Army into Holland

THIS Prussian petty officer happened to be the same orderly who was the secretary to the doctor whom I met on my first arrival in Emmerich. He and I had struck up quite a little friendship in the bygone days and when I asked him if he would let me go to my private quarters to get some heavy underwear, as the weather was cold and I was suffering from the pains that were my heritage from La Bassee, he readily granted the permission. Little did he know what was in my mind.

"Sure, you can go," he said, "but don't stay more than an hour and a half. You know what will happen to me if this is found out."

It was late in the afternoon then, and I was certain that this would give me plenty of time to reach the Dutch frontier if Dame Fortune still accompanied me. Possibly he would not have been so ready to do this favor for me if my company's commander had not been taking a day off enjoying himself at Dusseldorf.

Poor fellow, I often wonder what happened to him for this lapse of intelligence in the performance of his duties.

I lost no time in making my way down to Gumpert's boot shop. They were old friends of mine. I told the family that I was feeling miserable and that I would love to have a little recreation down at the amusement park. Would they lend me a bicycle?

The amusement resort was on the main road which led into Holland and my studies of geography from that map

which I had procured in Dusseldorf told me that it was only about a quarter of an hour's ride to breathe the air of freedom once more. My heart was thumping against my bosom in the thought that forever I was going to be free of the clutches of Kaiserism. I was confident I would not fail. I was playing for big stakes now, but it was not the first time that I had gambled with fate.

The Gumperts lent me the bicycle, and I was on my way in a short while to my private quarters. There I disrobed and put on civilian clothing. Three pairs of socks were on my feet, three suits of underwear and everything else in triplicate. I was determined to be well equipped. Then I put that hateful gray uniform over all, buttoned up my heavy military overcoat and I was soon on my way to Holland. I had taken my shaving things and just the necessary toilet articles.

I rode down then to the amusement resort. It was thronged with a gay, chattering crowd. No one going in there then would have thought that not so many miles off the grim realities of war were being enacted. There were pretty girls in plenty, sitting at the tables, chaffing with the men in gray.

I found an unoccupied seat at a table where some of my company were enjoying themselves. They hailed me gaily. I hung up my overcoat which had packed away in the pockets a tweed civilian hat and all the other things that I knew I would need on my trip to freedom.

I was just as gay as the others. I chaffed with the girls and swapped stories with the men. It was not long before the sun had stolen away in the west. Eagerly I watched twilight lengthening into night. Soon there was the inky blackness of a winter night in northern Germany. The stage was set for me. It was now or never.

I apologized for leaving such pleasant company, but I explained that I must get back to the "revier-stube." During my stay at the table I had learned the name of an officer who was making a lot of money by smuggling in from Holland things that were now beginning to get scarce in Germany.

This little item may not seem important, but it was a life-saver to me.

I left the party and instead of turning my bicycle to the left to go back on my way to Emmerich, I switched it in the direction that I knew would lead me into Holland. Along the slippery road, for the snow had melted only a short while previously, I made my way into the darkness. At frequent intervals I was halted by German patrols flashing their lamps in my face. When they saw the field service uniform which I wore they did not stop me to ask for passports. Evidently they thought me a couierr on a special mission. I could not help wonder at their mental stupidity.

Along I went through the gloomy night until I was getting close to the neutral road which comes between the German and the Dutch frontiers.

There was a lot of profiteering being done in those days by the soldiers who were stationed close to the Dutch border. I had my cue. As I came up to the entrance of the neutral road, I asked the sentry who stopped me if any oil had come through for the sergeant who was the secretary of the Sixth Company of the Fifty-seventh. Evidently he was aware of the smuggling activities of this man, for he told me that he had not heard of any such thing, but that if I went on to the guardhouse which was about a thousand yards distant, I would probably be able to learn there.

I gave him half a dozen cigars and went on my journey. At the guardhouse I was halted and asked my business. I was playing the game of bluff.

With no signs of nervousness I went up and asked to see the officer in command. I was ushered in and there I saw a group of soldiers playing cards and sipping some of Holland's best gin.

The sergeant in charge of the outpost asked me what was my business.

"Have you heard of a consignment of oil being sent across to Sergeant X., of the Sixth Company of our regiment?"

"No," he answered, "those things never come through before midnight."

"All right," I replied, "when the oil comes will you be kind enough to send a courier to the company's headquarters and let them know that it has arrived?"

My story sounded plausible enough and he replied that he would.

I handed out cigars for the men at the table and bade them farewell, a farewell which I was hoping would be a long one. Off I went then. In the distance I could see the lights from a farmhouse. I knew it was in Holland and I don't think I ever saw a more pleasing sight. There were only about 400 yards more for me to cover before I would be rid of what I hated so much.

I was still in a dangerous position and decided to leave the highway and take to the fields. At this time Holland was in the throes of the worst flood that had been experienced in twenty years and there was mud and water at the roadside knee-deep. I packed my cycle on my shoulder, and finding a little footpath that led through the fields to the farmhouse, I started on.

When I had gone a short distance I felt that I was on the road to safety. Contempt filled my heart for the laxity which had enabled me to get as far as I was. I put down the bicycle and took off the loathsome uniform. It might have been foolhardy what I did, but I wanted to show my scorn and disdain of the Prussian military system.

I went back to the neutral road and I threw the bundle back into Germany.

"Here you are, Wilhelm," I chuckled. "Take back the equipment. Perhaps you may have need for it some time for one of your dull-witted vassals."

I wended my way back toward that welcome beacon in the farmhouse and soon I was knocking on the door. Presently a woman came and opened it, admitting me. She was startled

at my sudden appearance, but when I spoke to her in Dutch and explained my coming there she welcomed me. She was a Belgian, married to a Hollander, and of course had no sympathy with the Germans.

The Belgian woman invited me into the house when I explained my predicament and gave me hot coffee and we sat chatting over my adventures. She seemed quite interested and I was confident that I had chanced on a sympathetic soul. Presently a knock was heard and upon opening the door a young girl from a neighbor's house was admitted. She had come on an errand from her family. I learned that she lived close to the ferry that took people over into the main part of the town of Spyk to which I wanted to get. We were in the outskirts of that community. I wanted to be as near the ferry as possible in the morning and asked the girl if it would be possible to put me up at her house for the night.

She told me that her brother worked in a munition plant in Emmerich on the night shift and possibly her folks would allow me to occupy his room. We then walked to her home and she told her father, an old Hollander, the circumstances and he agreed to let me pass the night there.

I discovered that the old Hollander, in spite of the fact that his son was working for Germany, was favorable to the Allies and it was merely a case of necessity with him. I said that I was a British Colonial and that I had been on a secret mission in Germany to get information for the cause of my country.

He was greatly interested in what he was learning of the conditions. I told him of the general unrest that was prevalent and of the hundreds who were deserting daily to get to Holland.

A stranger coming into a small town like this was immediately an object of curiosity and the news soon spread to the village tavern that there was a German deserter in the vicinity. The keeper of the Tavern was a man who was in the service of Germany, smuggling oils, fats and other things that were becoming scarcer and scarcer in Germany. He did a big trade in this contraband and every day it was his custom to

journey to Emmerich, where he would receive his money for the goods. Naturally his sympathies were with Germany because of what was to him a marvellous fattening of his pocketbook.

I was seated with the family, sipping a little schnapps before retiring, when there was a knock and a demand for admission.

"You have a German deserter in there. Open and let us in," were uttered in gruff words.

I asked the old man to delay until I had gotten my coat from the room upstairs.

This done, the party entered. It consisted of the saloon-keeper and four soldiers from the nearby frontier outpost.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded. "I know who you are."

It dawned on me that I had seen his face before. Then I remembered that when I first came to Wesel I had noticed him hanging around Imperial Headquarters and that he must be in the employ of the Kaiser.

"You are a deserter from the German army," he added, speaking German all the time.

I replied in Dutch: "Can't you speak the language of this country?"

He urged the soldiers to take me back as a deserter to the frontier.

Turning to the soldiers and speaking to them in their native tongue, which I knew fluently, I explained to them that I was not a German deserter, but an Englishman deserting from the ranks of the Kaiser. I felt confident that they would not dare molest me till they investigated my story.

The innkeeper was still in a very argumentative mood. He insisted that he knew I had been in the German secret service in Holland. Evidently I had been pointed out to him when I was in Wesel. It was strange that I should just happen to

run into him. I was in a ticklish position but I still kept my wits about me. I told the Dutch soldiers they might escort me to the commander of their post and I would tell my story to him. This they agreed to do. They wanted to know where my uniform was, but I insisted that I did not have one.

A crowd of curious villagers, attracted by the wordy warfare in the house, idled outside speculating on what was happening. I asked my venerable host if he would be willing to furnish testimony that I had arrived in Holland in civilian clothing. Two friends of his volunteered to act as witnesses for me and we started for the guardhouse. The soldiers ordered the innkeeper to leave me in their charge. He was so bitter that he wanted to start a fight with me. The two soldiers and the two civilians and myself then started off on a two-hour journey to the guardhouse. The fields were so badly flooded that we had to make the journey in a small motor boat.

The attitude of the people in this little village was friendly and surely my host had shown hospitality that a German of his station in life would not have displayed. The two Hollanders must have been strongly pro-Ally or they would not have come to my rescue. Later I learned that this sentiment prevailed in the middle class from the very outset of the war.

Our party presently arrived at Sevenaar, a big military camp, from which the outposts were sent to patrol the frontier. We were received there by the sergeant of the guard to whom the situation was explained. He told me that the commandant was not in his quarters, but would be in any moment, and I would have to tell my story to him.

I was treated with the utmost kindness and consideration. I was cold, hungry and soaking wet. The sergeant ordered a hot meal prepared for me and soon I was seated at a table before as fine a steak as I could have procured at the Savoy in London. It was now past midnight. My Dutch friends gave their testimony and departed, wishing me good luck and asking me to let them know what became of me. I could realize by my conversation with the soldiers and their general attitude that their sympathies were not with Germany.

Presently the whirr of a motorcycle was heard. The commandant had returned on it. I was escorted into his presence by the sergeant who told him that I was suspected of being a deserter from the German army.

"Have you come from the German field forces as a deserter?" he asked. This he addressed to me in English, for the sergeant had told him that I claimed English nationality. I was glad to make my reply in English.

"Yes," I smiled back at him, "I am a deserter from the German forces, but an Englishman."

"What were you doing with the Germany army, then?" he questioned.

"That is something I can't really discuss. I was there under orders of the British government."

"Well, what are your plans; what are you doing in Holland?" he asked.

"I am on my way back to England with news of vital importance, just as fast as I can get there," I replied. "I intend to go to Rotterdam and from there take a boat to London."

He was apparently kindly disposed and not eager to discredit my tale. He treated me very courteously but said that I would have to furnish proof that I was a Briton and that he could take no other course but detain me for the night. He then left me in charge of the sergeant of the guard.

My brain was working at high tension, now. I was won-dering what sort of an explanation I could frame up.

Before being escorted to my quarters I asked the sergeant if there was any objection to my despatching a post-card. He replied in the negative and now I was going to take a long chance, one that did not figure to get one out of difficulties of the nature that I was in. It did, as events proved, and showed that the machinery of an army, no matter of what country, is liable to have weak cogs here and there.

I sat down and addressed a card to Consul Tom, the British

representative at Rotterdam on which I stated that I was being detained at a Dutch military post, suspected of being a German deserter in spite of the fact that I claimed British nationality. Holland was in a rather nervous state at this time and did not care to offend England. I wound up my communication by requesting an investigation of my whereabouts if I had failed to report to him at Rotterdam within the next 24 hours.

I figured the sergeant would show the card to his commandant. I was then sent to a comfortable bed and had a good sleep. I was called before the commanding officer at ten o'clock the next morning.

The commandant's greeting was very cordial and I felt that there would be good news for me. He handed me a cigar and apologized for having had to detain me.

"You realize that on a Sunday night it is difficult to get into communication with any one at headquarters, so I had to wait till this morning before telephoning to the Hague. I did this and received orders that you were a free agent to go anywhere you pleased in Holland. You may depart whenever you desire."

I thanked him for his kind treatment and said I would lose no time in getting to Rotterdam. I learned that a train would be leaving the Sevenaar station in half an hour and fortified with a first-class breakfast furnished me at the post, I hastened forth.

During the war-times one was always seeing curious things and meeting with strange coincidences. At the Sevenaar station waiting for the same train I was going to take there was a soldier in the uniform of the French in the company of two Dutch soldiers. This looked odd.

From the gossip of loiterers about the station I learned that the Frenchman had been a prisoner of war in Germany and was forced to work in a coal mine. The party got into a compartment when the train rolled in and I entered the same one taking a seat opposite the Frenchman. Just before the train pulled out a well-dressed man of Teutonic aspect joined

us. I was suspicious when I saw this apparently well-to-do citizen travelling in the third class.

The poilu was talking to the Dutch soldiers in a combination of French, Belgian and Flemish, trying to tell them of how he had escaped from the internment camp. The well-dressed stranger time and again interrupted the conversation and I could figure that he was attempting to pump information out of the simple French soldier.

"Don't you know that these are war times?" I addressed the poilu in French, "and that it is dangerous to talk too much? You never can tell who your next door neighbor might be. Save your story of your escape until you are in the presence of your consul. What you may divulge may be of assistance to the Germans in preventing other fellow countrymen of yours to escape."

He was smart enough to take my tip and kept his mouth closed. At the next station the well-dressed man left the train. I figured then that he was one of the German espionage agents who were working at Sevenaar trying to get all information possible from allied deserters. The journey to Rotterdam was now a quiet one.

At the Rotterdam station I was approached by a short little chap, who greeted me in German, "Sind Sie armee deserteur."

"Go to hell," I answered him in my best English and he was taken so aback that I went through the gate without further molestation. I took a cab and made my way for a little hotel which I knew to be a rendezvous of French and Belgians and the proprietor of which was a Hollander with strong pro-Ally sentiments.

When I registered I still stuck to the story that I had told the commandant at Sevanaar, for I was not taking any chances of his having reported me to the Dutch authorities. I did not want to be under surveillance any longer. The proprietor, when he learned that I was attempting to get back to England placed a fine room at my disposal and after a bath I came down for dinner.

Seated at the next table was a group which conversed in French or in Belgian. I learned from their conversation that the host had already told them who I was. Presently he came to my table and asked me if he might introduce me to them. I agreed and was soon one of the merry party.

After a short conversation they showed me credentials that proved they were in the service of the Belgian and French secret service. They asked me if I desired henceforth to serve in the cause of the Allies. I replied in the affirmative, for I could never forget the brutal and inhuman treatment I had received at the hands of the Germans. I was determined to pay back everything in my power, not only for what had been done to me, but for all the cruelty I had seen inflicted on others.

They agreed to help me on my way to England, asking me if I wanted to go to the Hague where the French military attache would give me all the assistance I needed. An appointment was made for the next morning and after a very pleasant evening in which I was further convinced that the espionage service of the French and the Belgians in Holland was far superior to that of the Germans, an appointment was made for the trip to the Hague at ten the next morning.

We made straight for the offices of the French military attache. Here I was closely questioned. The French official wanted some convincing piece of evidence that I had information of value to the Allies, and that I was sincere in my statement that in the future I would work for them. I was assured that if I could furnish the right sort of material I would have no trouble in getting back to England and if I cared to from there back to my home in South Africa.

"Well," I replied after quite a lengthy conversation, "as a sample of my knowledge of the machinations of the German espionage in this country I will tell you just one thing. I think that will satisfy you for the present."

I then related the details of the secret telephone service between Holland and Germany of which I had learned when I was stationed at Captain Vollardt's office in Rotterdam. This was all news to him and he appeared rather astounded.

He still was not thoroughly convinced.

"I would like you to run over to Amsterdam," he added, "and see Mr. Hollderdt, editor of the Amsterdamer 'De Telegraf,' and repeat to him what you have told me."

Hollderdt, a native of Holland, it may be mentioned here, had been in hot water more than once with his government and had not long before been placed under arrest. The charges against him were that his writings were insistent that Holland was favoring Germany more than the Allies, and that there was really a secret understanding between Holland and Germany which was a violation of neutrality.

All this time I had in my company a Belgian secret service man named Beukard, who acted as my bodyguard. We were inseparable. We went over to Amsterdam, where I was greeted by Hollderdt, who had been apprised of my coming by the French military attache at The Hague. We were soon engrossed in my story of the secret wire connections between Germany and Holland. This pleased him immensely. It verified his suspicions and furnished rather convincing proof that there was foundation for his statements in his paper that there was an underground channel between Holland and Germany through which was leaking information valuable to the Kaiser's armies.

It was peaches and cream for him and the following morning 'De Telegraf' printed in scare heads the story of the secret wire connection between the supposedly neutral Holland and Germany.

Beukard received orders that morning that we were to proceed to Flushing where arrangements had been made by the French military attache with the British consular office for my safe conduct to England. The English office at Flushing had, in the meantime, communicated with the British War

Office in London. For an hour we waited at the British office, when a door opened and the chief of the Belgian secret service at Flushing entered. After a short conversation he conferred with the British official and I soon had a permit for safe conduct to England and a first-class passage aboard the S.S. "Princess Julianna," which was to leave for Tilbury late that night or early the following morning.

After receiving my credentials Beukard took me out to a cafe, where the Belgians and French secret service men congregated. We had a gay time until midnight when I boarded the ship, bidding good-bye to the Belgian and expressing my thanks to him for what he had helped me to do.

In spite of the close question of most of the passengers I was permitted to go to my stateroom without delay. Here I was, on my way to England, with little more than the word of the British consul that I would be well treated and safe.

That night I could not sleep; my mind was too full of thoughts of the past. Once more I was breathing the air of freedom. I was going to a land of democracy, a country where one's word was his bond. I felt that the yoke of autocracy was being cast off forever. As we steamed out I thrilled with the thought that German militarism was fast slipping out of my life.

The sea was very rough and few could sleep and none of the passengers went on deck. There was a motley crowd aboard, many of them being Belgian refugees who had been robbed of their homes by the monster of autocracy. We arrived safely at six in the following night, without being threatened by the menace of U-boat warfare.

IX.

Safe at last in England

HEN the passengers disembarked they were taken to a strongly guarded enclosure, where a very thorough examination of luggage was made and each one strictly questioned as to his destination and motives for going there. A captain from the army intelligence bureau was in charge of the proceedings and the inspection was much more minute than it had been when I left Tilbury for Holland on my return from South Africa. I expected that there would be some one there to meet me.

I was not disappointed in this surmise for soon I saw a hatless man enter through the gate and scrutinize the passengers. Twice he passed me before I went up to him and told him that possibly he was looking for me. He asked me who I was and when I told him my name he brought me up to the captain ahead of all the rest who were waiting. He was an operative from Scotland Yard. He introduced me to the officer and the latter lost no time in telling me that I was free to go on my way. My luggage was not even inspected. I knew then that the word of the British consul at Flushing was good, not that I had suspected otherwise.

The Scotland Yard man escorted me to a first-class compartment, which was reserved for the two of us. He closed the blinds so that we should have the utmost privacy and soon we were speeding on our way to London. On our arrival we took a cab and drove up to Scotland Yard. I was introduced to the officer in charge and he asked me what hotel I would like to go to. I told him that I had stopped at the Bedford on Southampton Row on my last visit to London, but he said that that hostelry was a bit distant and if I did not object he would prefer to have me nearer to the Yard. I

agreed to this and I was escorted to a nearby hotel by the detective. All this time not a question had been asked me. The man with whom I had come from Tilbury held a conference in secret with his superior, who was apparently well disposed toward me.

The Scotland Yard man took me to the hotel where I signed the strangers' book. The proprietor was apprised of the situation and I was given a nice room, where a delicious supper was served to me. An appointment was made for me to be ready at ten o'clock the following morning. On the stroke of the hour Detective-Sergeant Ginhoven, a Hollander by birth but a naturalized British citizen, met me. He had been detailed to my case by his superiors. He was an accomplished linguist and addressing me in German he asked me to accompany him to headquarters. There I was taken to the office of Mr. Thompson, the Deputy-Governor of Scotland Yard, without any delay.

The office was a well appointed one. At a long table were seated Mr. Thompson, two high ranking officers of the army from the War Office and another from the Naval Intelligence Bureau. Mr. Thompson had charge of the initial questioning and for twenty minutes I was interrogated by him while the officers took down notes.

This done, I was asked where I had my quarters. I told them and said that I was not particularly pleased with the Hotel. One of the army officers whom I afterwards learned was Captain Carter and who had been given full charge of my case, asked me where I would like to put up. I told him that I had been at the Bedford and that my luggage which I had brought from South Africa was in storage there. He asked me if I wanted to return there, but I replied in the negative.

I explained to him that as it was not a very large hotel I would soon be recognized as one who had escaped and gone into the service of Germany and things might be rather unpleasant.

He agreed with me and asked me what was my preference.

I told him I should like to go to the Strand-Palace in the Strand, one of the largest hostelries in London, where one would not be likely to encounter any person who knew him. He assented to this and detailed Detective-Sergeant Ginhoven to accompany me and aid me in getting suitable accommodations. He added that all expenses would be assumed by Scotland Yard.

Before parting Captain Carter, the British army officer, requested me to make a detailed report of my doings in the secret service in Holland and my experiences in Germany in writing in the form of a diary to supplement the important notes which they had already taken down. He treated me with every courtesy and shook hands with me as we said good-bye. I felt reassured and calm. I was confident that the British were going to act toward me with consideration.

Detective-Sergeant Ginhoven accompanied me to the Strand-Palace and introduced me to the manager.

"This is Mr. Edward Meyers," he said, "an enemy alien. Have you any objections to his being quartered at your hotel?"

"If he is registered," the manager replied, "there is no reason why he may not remain here, for there are several other enemy aliens in the house; but he will have to sign in a separate book which we keep for such cases."

The Sergeant told him that not only did Scotland Yard vouch for me, but also the British War Office, and that all my bills were to be sent to the War Office for payment.

The manager assigned me to a comfortable suite and after freshening up, Ginhoven and myself journeyed to the Bedford. More than a year had passed since my last view of that place. It was in August, 1914, that I had bade good-bye to it and started on my way to Holland and eventually the first-line trenches in the German service.

It was now early in January of 1916, and oh, how happy I felt to be once more back on ground that was familiar and which had become endeared to me. Long ago I had realized

my mistake in fighting against a country that stood for democracy and I felt that it was almost as if I were going into the trenches to do my bit against autocracy.

The manager was approached and asked for the luggage which I had left behind in 1914. Ginhoven showed him his authority from Scotland Yard and when a verification of this was received a porter was ordered to look it up. He soon came back with word that it was still there in the storage rooms, intact, and it was delivered to us. We then returned to the Strand-Palace.

The sergeant took me to a nearby police station in Picadilly, where he introduced me to the desk officer who had been an old fighter in the British army. This grizzled chap greeted me affably when he learned that I had escaped from Germany and that I had come to England to do what I could for the cause of the Allies.

"How long do you think the war will last?" he asked.

"A couple of years yet," I replied.

"I think from what I have learned that it will be ten years before it is finished," was his statement.

An identification card was given me and I was instructed that I would be a free agent and if I should get into any difficulties all I would have to do would be to call up this station and all necessary assistance would be given me. The only restrictions placed on me were that I must be at my hotel by ten o'clock at night, but that if I wanted to remain away from my quarters later than that special permission would be granted me. They assured me that all they wanted to know was where I might be reached. With this done Ginhoven bade me good-bye and I was at liberty, comparatively.

Before I parted with Ginhoven I told him that if he should want me at any time in the afternoon he might call up Wynburne and Company, in Castle Street, and explained to him that they were old friends of mine from South Africa, who were conducting a large manufacturing business. I did not want to call on Irvine again, the friend who had almost gotten me into serious trouble on my last visit to London. I considered it the safe plan not to borrow trouble.

The Wynburne's were surprised to see me. They were doubly so when I related my story to them. In the days following my arrival at the Strand-Palace I used to devote four hours to writing my diary. Frequently I was called up at Wynburne's by Ginhoven to meet him at Scotland Yard to answer questions and receive my expense account, which was always a generous one. Sundays I always dined with the Wynburne family at their home.

In about a week's time my diary was completed and then all I was obliged to do was to report about twice a week to Captain Carter to elucidate certain points in my report and give more intimate details.

In my report and in my conversations with Captain Carter I told of how I knew of several men in the espionage service of Germany who were making regular trips aboard the Holland line between Rotterdam and New York. I could not tell him their names. That would have been useless anyhow, for they were probably travelling under assumed names, but I assured him that I could readily point them out.

It was now late in February. During my six weeks' stay in London there had been little restriction on my comings and goings and most of the evenings I spent at the theatre and seldom was home before eleven. I was treated with far more leniency than the ordinary enemy alien. Evidently my information had been appreciated. I had been having a very enjoyable time to make up for the days of terrorism through which I had passed.

One day I was asked to report to Captain Carter. He said that in his opinion I might do better work if I were assigned to a neutral country and asked me if I would be willing to go to the United States. I told him that I was at the call of Great Britain to undertake any mission which it considered me capable of fulfilling and that I did not care what might be my destination.

"Righto," he answered, "how would you like to take a trip to New York?"

"That suits me perfectly," I answered.

The sailing lists were looked up and it was found that the "California" was due to leave Liverpool on the following morning.

"Would you be prepared to ship aboard that vessel?" asked Captain Carter.

I assured him I would and he made arrangements to provide me with plenty of funds for my voyage. He also assured me that I would be given a liberal bonus for the work that I had already rendered in the cause of the Allies.

Sergeant Sage, who had been detailed to my case for the last eight days, was instructed to book my passage for New York, which he did and I was destined to bid farewell to London, that city which all my life I had loved. I had been given a sum which was adequate to cover my trip and went to pay a final visit to my friends, the Wynburne's, after spending most of the afternoon in shopping for the things which I considered requisite.

I was told that upon my arrival in New York I was to report to the British Consulate and apprise the officials there of anything of value that I might learn in New York. I was assured that they would give me any assistance that might be necessary if differences should arise with the American immigration officials.

That night at ten o'clock the stage was all set for what might prove to be another adventure worth while. As fate ruled, so it did. This time, though, it was not so much an adven-

ture of war; it was an adventure of love, and who has been born yet who can say which is the more hazardous—war or love?

Sergeant Sage met me and we went off for the St. Paul station. I bade him farewell and got on the train. I looked out through the window as the train was to pull out for Liverpool a minute after midnight and I noticed that he was in conversation with the conductor. Immediately I realized that he was instructing him that I was to be watched. In spite of all the cordiality and courtesy that had been shown me by the British officials I realized that I was to be kept under surveillance. The British secret service was not taking any chances that at the last moment I might get into difficulties on my trip to Liverpool. They wanted to see that I landed safely there without getting into any intimate communication with passengers aboard the train. Every wall had eyes and ears in Great Britain in those days. You could never trust your own keyhole unless it was plugged up.

So we went on to Liverpool and arrived there at six in the morning of a pitch dark, rainy February day. As we were detrained I was looking for some one to be shadowing me. I looked about and noticed a tall, mysterious person who was scrutinizing the labels on the luggage of the different passengers who were booked for a sailing. There were only about thirty of them. After I had gone through the regular routine of examination I thought I would slip over to the Adelphi hotel and have a little eye-opener. My suspicions about that tall, lanky individual were confirmed when I saw him almost at my elbow.

This mysterious person was close to me the little while I remained in the cafe. I thought I would have a bit of fun with him and adjourned to the wash-room. There I remained about ten minutes, feeling sure that I would make him nervous. Presently he came in, evidently thinking that I had eluded him by getting out some back entrance. I was chuckling to myself

and determined to carry along a bit further, so I went into the dining-room and had my breakfast. I dallied over the morning papers for nearly two hours and every once in a while I would see his face at a window which had command of the room. After I considered that I had been spoofing him quite enough I went out into the rain and made as if I were going to board a tram. Immediately he was at my shoulder. I then changed my mind, as he thought, and politely asked him if he could give me the correct time. He told me it was half past nine.

"Listen, old chap," I said. "You have me under observation, haven't you?"

"What do you mean by that?" he replied.

"Oh, never mind, but when I left London," I answered, "I was told by Sergeant Sage, of the Scotland Yard, that I was going to be watched until I got aboard the 'California.' You are in the Secret Service, I imagine. I was, too, for a long time and I was rather amused to watch you watching me."

He smiled then, and admitted that he had been detailed to keep track of me.

"Come along with me," I said, "and we will spend the few hours that are left before sailing in my company. There is no use of you standing out in the rain and being uncomfortable. I want to get a few toilet articles and we can make our selection together."

He was a nice sort of chap, a man who had been in the secret service or the police force for most of his life. He had to do his duty and there was no personal grievance between the two of us, so he readily agreed that we should keep company until the time of the sailing, for it would relieve him of a lot of unnecessary details.

We spent a few hours pleasantly together, shopping for toilet articles and having tea together before we came back to

the quay. He told me that his last duty was to see me safely aboard and that he would give me a signal to show that he had fulfilled his orders. On the wharf there was an extremely close inspection of the luggage of the passengers and a strict inspection of their passports followed by a full interrogation of why they were leaving England for America.



On my way to America I Discover the One Woman

I HAD no passports, simply a little note from the Home Office to the effect that I was Edward Meyers and that I was to be sent on to my destination without further questioning. When I was taken up to the chief emigration official the passengers who were ready to embark were somewhat surprised that I was sent through without any red tape. All I was asked to do was to write down my signature on the letter which I had received from the Home Office.

I walked up the gangplank and after showing my ticket to the purser I was taken by a steward to my cabin. As soon as I had placed my luggage in order I went up on deck. No friend was allowed to come aboard to make the final farewell. On the quay there was a crowd waving good-bye to their friends. I had none there and felt a bit lonesome. As it happened I stood between two women who were watching the scene as arrangements were being made for us to steam out into the stream and begin our voyage for America.

There were few cheerful faces. Tears were prevalent among the passengers, not that they were afraid of the U-Boats, but it was that nervous tension of those who were making an adventure into an unknown region. Down below on the wharf handkerchiefs were applied with great frequency to eyes of those who were a bit perturbed that perhaps they would not see again those who were dear to them. Remember, it was then the day when the pirate craft of the sea, the German submarines, were at the height of their success.

On my right there was a woman, all bundled up in furs. She was chatting gaily with friends who had come to see her off. There were no tears in her eyes. She was gay and chaffing with the sombre personages who were wishing her a safe voyage.

My interest was aroused. I wondered who she might be. I heard her speaking of her dear little dogs, and I could not help but think that this was a rather strange thing to be thinking of just before going out into the vast sweep of the Atlantic, where at any moment we might find lurking for us, one of the U Boats.

There were no salty tears streaming down her cheeks; none down mine. I was convinced that she had run the gamut of the German sea menace before and I was determined to make her acquaintance.

Orders in those days were that everyone had to wait for the word of the Admiralty before clearance was granted. It might be a minute; it might be an hour. In our case it was four hours before we received orders to proceed on our journey. We slipped out of our moorings, down stream where we were ordered to anchor until further information from the British sea dogs that were guarding the waters from the shores of Britain to those of America. All night long we lay there at our anchorage, after being instructed in the necessary manoeuvers in adjusting life-belts in case we should be attacked by a German submarine.

It was a gloomy, nasty night, one characteristic of that time of year on the on the southwestern British coast. It was not raining, but it might just as well have been, with the huge gobs of dripping mist which enshrouded the vessel.

I walked up and down the deck, peering into the inkiness of that night, pondering over who my fellow-passengers might be and trying to sense their thoughts. I knew what mine were. Summed up I might say, "Get us away as soon as possible."

I feared no submarine. I had dared other things that had made me learn to put fear behind me. The gods of wits and discretion were my deities. Fear was non-existent. I wondered as I puffed at cigar after cigar how many were of the same mental attitude.

All night long we lay at anchor. At midnight I retired and dropped into a deep sleep. When I awoke we were on the high seas bound for the land which stood most for the democratic idea in the scheme of world government. I slept one of the soundest sleeps I had enjoyed in many a moon. There was nothing further, as I could see, to worry about.

After being rocked into sweet dreams all night by Father Neptune I awoke in the morning and came on deck. The brisk sea breeze and the lazy loll of the sea, combined with the vibration of the California which was speeding along at her best, put new life into me. My pains were all forgotten. I felt new life coming into me, physically as well as mentally.

After luncheon I adjourned to the smoking-room, where it was not long before I was acquainted with an interesting group of men who were making the trip back to America. A game of bridge was suggested. We were all eager to relieve the monotony of the voyage.

In the party which expressed a desire to sit down at the table were a British official, who was going to take the place of the governor of one of the colonial possessions of Great Britain, a lieutenant, who had been all through the hell of Gallipoli and who had been relieved to return to the secret service bureau in its operations in the United States, and another Briton, who was agent for the American Bethlehem Steel Company, who was on a flying visit to America—Albany Petch.

Mr. Petch was a lovable character, a born leader, and an entertainer. He was at the head of all the sports aboard ship, always trying to discover some new diversion to keep the minds of the passengers off the menace of the submarine.

The first day that he arranged a pool on the number of knots that the ship would run, the "Lady of the Furs," the one beside whom I stood at Liverpool as farewells were being made, happened to hit on the lucky number. I was eager to meet her and here I saw my opportunity. I asked Mr. Petch if he would grant me the privilege of presenting her with the prize. This he graciously allowed me to do.

I walked up to the "Lady of the Furs" and told her that she was the winner of the prize which amounted to five sovereigns. She smiled sort of cynically but most politely at me. She had been aboard ship before and she was not a novice in these flirtations of the sea. She considered me just one of those travellers who like to while away the time from port to port with a harmless little bit of love-making. She would not believe me that she was the winner, for she had seen me walking past her several times, looking as if I should like to make her acquaintance.

Mr. Petch came up, though, and assured her that she was the victor. Then the ice was broken and it was not long before we had arranged a merry little party of the subscribers to the pool, winner and losers alike, and we celebrated the occasion. I saw to it that my steamer-chair was next to hers. There was some good champagne aboard and we ordered a round for all. We had a jolly party and all were soon acquainted and swapping stories of their pasts and what they hoped to be their futures. War was the last thing in our minds then.

Bridge was no longer interesting to me. I forsook the smoking-room and a new partner had to be found to take my place. I was up betimes, pacing the decks for the arrival of the "Lady of the Furs." Soon she came out and took her accustomed station. I strolled up and bade her good morning and spoke a lot of innocuous things about the weather and the doings aboard ship.

I noticed that she had two wonderful little dogs in her arms that she caressed fondly. I did not know what they were,

but it was not long before she disclosed the fact that her hobby was the raising of Pomeranians and that these were possibly two of the best in the world.

I could grasp at any straw, for by this time I was saying to myself, "Here is the one woman that I have been seeking in my thoughts and dreams all my life."

I then began to recall the days down in South Africa when I had a fancy for Great Danes and had quite a respectable kennel of them in the Transvaal. I had my cue. We began to talk dogs.

The "Lady of the Furs" invited me to come below to the quarters of the butcher, for you know that he is always the man who takes care of dogs that are makings trips aboard ship. I was delighted that she should let me share in her pleasure and so were the others who were looking for any sort of diversion from the routine of the daily sailing.

That party of ten became very friendly as the journey shortened. There were many visits down to see the little pets that "The Lady of the Furs" was bringing across to America. One of them, by the way, which she held in her arms the morning I first made her real acquaintance developed into a champion in America, Fairfax Wee Freddie, which proved to me later that she knew what she was talking about.

Time was getting short. Soon we were going to be wending our way up the Narrows of New York Bay.

It was late at night. The stars were out. We were all on the qui vive for a landing in the western metropolis. Things had ripened rapidly between me and "Kitty," for I had now learned to know her by this name. I had lied a bit to her, for I had told her that I was a native of South Africa, and she was one of the most loyal British women I have ever met. All along our trip in the last few days of the voyage the passengers had been chaffing us. They were figuring that perhaps there was a romance in their midst.

We were coming close to the shores of America, the land of hope, the land of accomplishment. We sat there on deck, listening to the purring of the propellers. We tried to find the Star of Venus in the skies, that brilliant orb which thousands before have sought for when they were in a romantic mood aboard ship. It was getting close to saying good-bye.

My heart was pounding against my bosom. Perhaps I was conceited enough to think that hers was. The Statue of Liberty was about to loom up the distance. I hoped for it, soon as possible.

My training in the secret service had taught me that the man of impulse is usually the man of success. In love I was a man of impulse. I had the experience that the man who labors along with a lot of words never gets any place. With a woman whom you love and whom you want, the least said the better. The curter you talk to her, the more up-to-the-point things you say, are going to convince her that your intentions are sincere.

We were racing along through the seas when I made my declaration. She seemed not averse to accepting me. I wanted to be honest and as we sat there, thinking of the step that might be taken I told her that I had a secret to confide in her before we should seal the bargain.

"I shall tell you something that I would tell to no one else in the world," I said, "provided you will not disclose it to any one."

She swore secrecy, for I realized then that she was in love with me and willing to play the game of life alongside of the South African adventurer, the German secret service man, the soldier for the Kaiser in the trenches and eventually a man who was to work for the cause of the Allies.

We were sailing along in a lazy sea. It was dark, with nothing to disturb us but the stars that were popping out of the heavens. I looked at her in the darkness, the "Lady of the

Furs" who had attracted me so at Liverpool. I was going to lose no chance and I gasped a moment and said:

"I love you; won't you be my wife?"

She was somewhat startled at this sudden declaration. I told her that I was sincere and that I would tell her something that few but God Almighty could worm from me, if she would believe my intentions. She announced that she was willing to listen to me, and then I announced that I had been prevaricating and that I had been born a German.

As I told her this she nearly collapsed.

I then told her the true story of my life, how I had been born a German, how I had lived in South Africa for so long and of my escape to Germany to fight for the Kaiser. I assured her that I was now pro-Ally and she was convinced that I must be, else I would not be aboard a British ship.

"Edward, I believe you," she said, "and am willing to accept you. I was trembling with happiness, and after sealing the bargain with a kiss, I quickly rushed below to find Mr. Petch to announce the glad tidings. In his cabin there were several officers who were returning to Canada indulging in a farewell party. These were the chief chaffers who had been poking fun at the two of us on the voyage. A cheer went up from them when I made the announcement that the charming British woman was going to be my wife.

There was nothing to it but that we awaken the chief steward who obligingly opened the smoking-room, thus proving once more the old saying that "All the world loves a lover."

Champagne was opened and we had a merry party to celebrate our adventure into the land of love. Till four in the morning we sat there reminiscing over the early days of the shipboard courtship and the little incidents which had led up to the engagement, while the champagne flowed joyously. We had but few a hours' sleep before we felt the ship come to a

halt. Dressing hurriedly we were soon on deck and the heartstirring sight of the Statue of Liberty filled us with emotion. It was my first view of it and it was doubly inspiring to me, because I at last was in the land of true democracy and behind me forever lay autocracy.



XI.

More trouble in New York

FTER the usual routine of the inspection of immigration officials and with little questioning I was permitted to land and once more I was in a neutral country. It was March 1, 1916 and little did I dream that it would not be so many months more before the United States would be embroiled in the conflict to cast off the yoke of despotism.

I made haste to get quarters at the McAlpin Hotel, while my new-found fiancee put up at the Gregorian nearby. I was in the shackles of Cupid and was making the most of my strange happiness. New York was new to me and I was thrilled at the sight of the towering buildings, the wonderful restaurants and cabarets and the theatres. I was doubly happy because I could enjoy seeing them in company with one I loved.

It took me a week to come down to earth and I reported to Captain Guy Gaunt, the British naval attache, telling him of my mission and stating that I expected within a few days to furnish him with information of value to the Allies. Captain Gaunt gave me his private telephone number and told me to call him when I had anything to disclose.

The days passed by swiftly and Kitty and I had made our minds up to get married as quickly as possible, the date eventually being set for April 4. My mind was full of the impending marriage and I could not get my mind on business. We celebrated our marriage at the Gregorian, in the company of a jolly party, which adjourned to Maxim's, where the nuptial celebration was continued until four in the morning.

Two days after my marriage I was back at work in the secret

service and gave to Captain Gaunt information about a German spy who was travelling between New York and Rotterdam, which he considered of high importance. He cabled this immediately to the War Office in London. I never knew what the outcome of this was, but I was pretty confident that the shrewd British authorities would take care of the matter.

There was little for me to do in the secret service and for five weeks Kitty and I lived in the bliss of two well-mated and congenial souls, motoring to the outlying districts of the American metropolis and seeing all that was worth while.

Fate still, however, seemed to have a finger pointed at me. In our hotel they were fumigating an adjoining apartment and some careless operator failed to seal up all the apertures which led into our room. Under the door which connected with our bedroom the poisonous fumes trickled. Luckily a waiter came with our breakfast and aroused us. We noted that our little Pomeranian was coughing and presently began to vomit.

Everything tasted bitter and I began to cough like the dog. I became suspicious and getting into a dressing-gown I went out into the corridor. Opposite me I saw a sign on the door of the adjoining apartment, "Danger." I rushed back and shouted to Kitty: "My God, we are poisoned."

With that I collapsed and for several hours was unconscious. The dog died in twenty minutes.

We were shifted to another apartment and a doctor was called. When I came to I had a recurrence of the pains that were my heritage from the German trenches and for six months I was almost as helpless as I was after leaving the battlefield at La Bassee. Once more I had to walk with the assistance of crutches.

After three weeks' confinement at the hotel we took a house overlooking the Hudson at Yonkers and there we spent the summer months.

One of the common after-effects of life in the trenches is a

loss of memory. I had suffered this, but I was cured when I arrived in America. The effect of those fumes was as if I had been gassed on the field of battle and once more I was in a state where I could not remember things for any length of time. I was then practically useless in the secret service.

The summer passed and I gradually began to mend. By October of 1916 I was able to make my way about with the assistance of a walking stick. We determined to come back to live in the city and I wanted to please my wife by furnishing her with a place where she could enjoy her hobby of keeping several prize-winning thoroughbred dogs, which, by the way, were some of the choicest of England's stock. So we took a house in the Herald Square district and with this beginning I became interested in real estate and determined to make this my future business.

What I had seen of the Americans filled me with a desire to make my home in the United States for good. They were cordial, free and happy. There was no spirit of oppression in their moods. Life in the land of liberty furnished a strong contrast to what I had seen in Germany. I resolved to become a citizen of Uncle Sam's country and took out my first papers in January of 1917.

Fate still marked me. Through thick and thin I stuck to the story that I was a native of South Africa and no one, except my wife and Captain Gaunt knew my true status. When diplomatice relations were severed between the United States and Germany in April I began to feel uneasy. I trusted that I would not be discovered and did not register as an enemy alien, which all those who did not have their full citizenship papers were obliged to do.

The real estate business was flourishing and by November I had several houses in which I rented out furnished apartments. That winter was one of the most severe experienced in New York in a generation and to add to the discomfiture of the population there was a shortage of coal. I advertised in an

evening paper that I had a comfortable steam-heated apartment for rent. A married couple from Greenwich Village, the haunt of Bohemians, where steam heat was practically unknown, came and asked me if they could have the apartment. They seemed respectable enough and I let them have the lodgings.

The following morning a smartly dressed man came and asked me if I could let him have a room. I told him that everything was occupied with the exception of the parlor floor. He asked my price and I told him. While we were talking he began to question me as to who the other tenants were. When I mentioned the name of Major Edmonson, who was in charge of the British remount service in New Jersey, at the time resided in my house, he expressed great interest in him.

I began to get a bit suspicious over the particular interest he was showing in the Briton, and closing the door of the room in which we stood, I asked him what his real business was. I was convinced that it was not a room that he was looking for.

I told him that I was strongly pro-Ally and he answered that he was glad to hear that. He asked me where I was born and I still stuck to my story that I was a British Colonial.

"Who are you, though, I should like to know?" I asked him.

He then showed me a badge of the Military Intelligence and produced his credentials. He then admitted that he had come to keep under observation a certain party which had arrived from the Greenwich Village the night before. I was dumfounded. I could not help but wonder if there would ever come a time when my lucky star would begin to dawn.

We arranged to have a conference with Major Edmonson that night and at six o'clock the military intelligence man, accompanied by a man from the naval bureau, visited the house. They explained the situation to the Major and asked him if he would not permit them the use of a room in his apartment for necessary work in observing the suspects. Major Edmon-

son asked them for the name of their superior and when they mentioned Major Biddle, chief of the military intelligence bureau in New York, he said that in the morning he would get into communication with him and that if he vouched for them they might have his entire apartment for their operations as he would be only too glad to do all he could for the United States.

With that the two agents departed and the following morning at half past ten I received the O. K. from Major Edmonson and that they were to have the freedom of his apartment. They arrived soon after and in half an hour or so they had dictaphones installed where they would do the most good.

For four months the Greenwich Village couple was kept under constant surveillance and I did all I could to assist the intelligence officers. One day the wife came up to me and announced that her husband had enlisted in the American army. I immediately telephoned this information to the Military Intelligence Bureau and Inspector Brady was soon up at the house. He spent a long time interrogating the couple and finally came to me, announcing that the suspicions were unfounded and that the pair that had been under observation was all right.

Inspector Brady left me thanking me for the good services I had rendered his department and he assured me that I might let the couple remain.

This did not appeal to me, however, and I conferred with my wife as to what she thought was the best course. The Greenwich Village woman said that she desired to remain and related that she and her husband had been under suspicion, not knowing that I was already well aware of this. I did not want to have such doubtful characters in my house and decided to get rid of them just as soon as their time was up. It took me six weeks, though, before I was able to have the apartment vacated because of their difficulty in obtaining another one of a suitable nature.

A load was lifted from my mind as soon as I saw the

last trace of that couple. I began to breathe a bit more freely and felt that perhaps the clouds were going to break at last.

Perhaps I was breathing freedom a bit too soon. I had not yet done in my dealings with Dame Fate. One thing after another seemed to pursue me. Late in the summer of 1918, when America was engrossed to the fullest in the war, I once more had a vacant apartment and again I advertised it for rent. A man who called himself Van Earp replied and when I told him that I did not want any enemy aliens on my property he replied that he was a Hollander. I thought I might test him in speaking the language of Holland, but he told me that he had been so long out of the country that he had become rusty in the use of the language. I let him have the room.

It was not long after that the maid who had charge of his quarters reported to me that there was some one else sharing the apartment with him. I questioned him about this and he answered that he was entertaining a friend. I asked him if his friend were a German, because the maid had told me that he could not speak good English.

"No," he answered, "he is an Austrian of a very good family, and an old friend of mine whom I know from the other side."

This satisfied me for the time when I was assured that he had been registered and had his papers of safe conduct. Still I was suspicious. Things did not look right. Van Earp had told me that he was in the hotel business and that his friend was holding down a temporary job as a night clerk at the Hotel York, although he was really a professor of languages and that he slept in the day time.

It all sounded a bit fishy to me, but I had no direct evidence that would condemn either one of them. One morning the maid came to me and announced that the apartment was vacant and I thought I would do a little exploration. When I went down I found that the shutters were equipped with special locks that

had not been there when I rented the apartment. This looked particularly queer. I figured there was something odd in the case.

Van Earp had told me that his friend, an Austrian, was only earning \$60 a month, but he was always well dressed and seemed to be in good circumstances. Van Earp explained this by saying that he was making up all financial deficiencies for his friend.

At this time there was a rush to work in the munition plants because of the inflated wages. One day I happened on Van Earp in the tea-room which was on the ground floor of my house.

"Oh," I said, "You are not working today?"

"No," he replied, "I have decided to change my position. I am going to get a position in a munitions plant in New Jersey."

"Whereabouts?" I asked. "Do you know anything about the manufacture of munitions? Did you ever work in a plant before?"

He answered me in the negative and told me that he was going to receive the position as foreman because he had the requisite influence. When I queried as to where he was going to be stationed he told me that he had the choice of two places and was going to pick the most favorable one for his purposes.

He assured me that there was nothing for me to worry about as to paying the rent and that on the fifteenth of each month I would have a cheque, paying in full for the obligations he had assumed. He assured me further that his friend was trustworthy and that he would probably occupy the rooms more than he did.

Possibly this might have sounded plausible enough, but I recognized that these two were foreigners and every moment I was becoming more and more suspicious. I could not understand why a \$60-a-month clerk should be hobnobbing with a

man who was apparently in good circumstances. Many a night I talked with my wife about the strangely assorted pair, but there was nothing that we could find in their actions that might convict them. They seemed to be honest, but intuitively I could feel that there was an under-current of treachery and deceit.

I was rapidly becoming an American. The atmosphere of the Reef Road in the Transvaal and that of Broadway differ vastly. I had become inoculated with the spirit of the "Great White Way" and through acquaintances that I had made I learned to love that fateful old game of trying to pick the winners at Belmont Park, Jamaica, Empire City or wherever the bangtails were running. It became an obsession with me, but Dame Fate was still on my track and the ones I figured best always seemed to run last. In this way I lost a lot of money. My wife learned of my doings and the first breach in our married life came. We quarreled a lot and finally she was taken down with nervous prostration. She was in bed about a week, worrying not only of the financial ditch that the horses were digging for me, but also about the conduct of the houses.

One Sunday morning she asked me to go and inspect things. I went downstairs and as I passed the apartment which Van Earp had leased I noticed that the door was wide open. I looked in and there I saw his friend, the rooming clerk, in a dressing gown, surrounded by luggage that had been packed up as if for a quick exit.

He called me in and was in a very agitated state of mind.

He was shaking all over and nervous as could be. "What's the trouble?" I asked.

"Haven't you heard the news," he replied. "My friend, Van Earp, is missing. He was not home last night. Don't you know that the big Gillespie munitions plant, where he was a foreman, was blown to atoms?"

"Yes, I have heard that," I countered. "But what has that got to do with the case? Van Earp may turn up yet. I can see no reason why you should be so worried that you should want to give up the quarters on which he has a lease for months yet."

I asked him to wait while I conferred with my wife. It was then about eleven o'clock in the morning and he said that he would be agreeable to remain until two in the afternoon. All through the district newsboys were shouting out the story of the disaster which had cost the Allies millions in money and untold machinery in the furtherance of the fight for victory.

I called up the Military Intelligence department over the private number that Inspector Brady had given me months before, but I received no answer. Then I recalled that the "Evening Telegram," which was nearby, had a list of numbers printed daily, which everyone was urged to paste in his hat in case of emergency. Just as it happened that day the numbers were left out.

On my way out I encountered a policeman. I requested him to watch my house and if a short, thick-set man with two grips should come out, to detain him until I came back. I was sure the Austrian would try to elude me.

I rushed over to the office of the "New York Herald" and explained my errand to the attendant in charge. I told him that I had under suspicion a man whom I thought had some connection with the blowing up of the Gillespie plant. He reported to one of the editors and soon I was telling him the story. I asked him to get me in touch with the correct authorities to furnish me with an investigator of some one under suspicion as having had a hand in the Gillespie disaster. This was done in a jiffy.

Then I rushed back to the house. As I passed the French Theatre I saw the friendly policeman holding up the Austrian, the two of them in a heated argument. The policeman was asking him for his credentials. As I came into sight the Austrian called out, "Mr. Meyers, won't you come here and vouch for me that I am all right?"

"I should say not," I answered, "I have a pretty good idea of who you are and if you will return to your quarters it will not be long before you can explain to the proper authorities."

"Very well," he exclaimed, "if that's the way you feel about it I shall be only too glad to go back with you."

We started back and on the way I met Tom Martin, one of my tenants, who was the manager of the Columbus Club, which had quarters on the ground floor of the house. I knew him to be a true-blue American. I asked him if he would come up to the apartment of Van Earp. I told him that he was suspected to have some connection with the blowing up of the Gillespie plant and that I wanted him to keep a watch on his room-mate.

"Above all," I cautioned him, "don't let this man destroy any papers." He was keen to volunteer and went up to keep a watch on him while I waited downstairs for the coming of a man from the Intelligence Department.

Presently a dapper looking chap came up and asked me if I was Edward Meyers. I thought he might have been the detective and told him I was. I asked him who he was and he announced that he was a reporter from the "New York Herald" and had been assigned to "cover" the case, pending the arrival of the man from the Intelligence Bureau.

I asked him if he thought I had done right and he said, "If there were only more who used their wits fast enough, we might snare a lot more who have been plotting against our country and the rest of the Allies."

I took him up to Van Earp's apartment and he waited there with Martin for the arrival of the detective. He assured me that the "Herald" had been in communication with the Intel-

ligence Department and that he would not have to wait long until there would be some one on hand to make an investigation.

In less than half an hour an operative from the Department of Justice arrived and started to query the Austrian and examine the quarters which he was so ready to vacate. A minute investigation of all the personal belongings of Van Earp and his partner was made.

The inspection was taking a long time. It was not completed until three o'clock in the afternoon. It was a strange coincidence that for the first time since Van Earp and his friend had been lodging at my house that they were sought by visitors in the daytime. Three times during the course of the investigation the bell rang and the visitors requested to see Mr. Van Earp. Martin had gone, but in the room with the Austrian always the "Herald" reporter and the detective sat. They watched every move of his closely.

Each solicitous visitor who was anxious to learn of the whereabouts of Van Earp was received by the detective who took him into an adjoining room and queried him about his own status and learned his address. He was seeking any possible ramifications in the plot that we now all were sure Van Earp had a big hand in.

Everything appeared satisfactory to the Department of Justice man. The operative called me aside and he said that the Austrian's credentials were without a flaw and that he could do nothing but let him go. He admitted that Van Earp was the man to be sought and that he would have to get on his trail. The Austrian was then permitted to depart after giving his future address. This might have been fictitious, but the secret service operator assured me that he would be well watched in all his travels henceforth.

The reporter and the secret service man left the house and the Austrian remained in his room. An hour or so later the reporter came back and asked the foreigner if he could furnish him with a picture of Van Earp. He readily assented with a request that the photographs be returned to him as soon as copies were made of them. About five o'clock in the afternoon, while returning from a walk, I met the reporter coming out of the house and he told me that the Austrian had informed him that Van Earp was alright and that he expected friends to come to the house that night to remove his luggage.

This information startled me and I decided that my course would be to get into immediate communication with the Military Intelligence Department. I got the office of Major Potter on the wire through the aid of the policeman on the beat and explained what I had learned, and it was not long before another detective arrived to place the Austrian under strict observation and to question him as to his knowledge of Van Earp's whereabouts.

The Austrian denied that he had made such an admission to the reporter and that he did not know where Van Earp was. He insisted that there must have been a misunderstanding. Both the detective and I were still suspicious and the secret service man gave him orders to remain in his quarters that night.

The following morning the "Herald" carried a sensational story of how the foreman of the Gillespie plant, was missing and related the incidents of the discovery of his lodgings near Herald Square. At nine o'clock a stranger came up to me as I was standing at the door of the house and he asked me if I could direct him to Mr. Van Earp's apartments. I asked him who he was.

"What's that to you?" he replied.

"It's a whole lot," I retorted, "I want to know what your name and address are before you can go upstairs."

I explained to him that I was the landlord of the house and that no one could go up to Van Earp's quarters unless he had particular business. I told him that I had orders to that effect.

He asked me from whom and I answered that they were from the Military Intelligence Bureau. I added that Van

Earp's room-mate was in the house, but that the Gillespie foreman had not yet shown up. With this sally of words he produced his credentials from the Military Intelligence Department and I allowed him to proceed to the Austrian's room.

The secret service man ordered the suspect to dress immediately and he escorted him off to headquarters for further interrogation to supplement what had taken place the night before. In a few minutes they were on their way. I had volunteered to watch Van Earp's apartment in the absence of the pair and to take the names and addresses of any who might be seeking the German or his partner. In a couple of hours the Austrian returned in the company of another detective who assured me that there was nothing against the foreigner as far as could be proved, and that he was at liberty to go where he pleased when he wished to. The Austrian was furious and he lost no time in getting clear of the place. He packed up his belongings in a few minutes, called a taxicab and was off.

I was glad to be free of this source of trouble. Soon, however, another secret service man came up to the house and asked me if I would mind going down to Major Potter's office at Police Headquarters. I readily assented.

All through this commotion, trouble and hours of worry my wife was lying helpless in bed. I went to her and told her what had been asked of me. She told me that she felt that she could be alone for an hour or so, which I stated was all the time that I expected to be gone.

So I went down to Major Potter's office at Police Headquarters and was taken into his private quarters where he was seated with a lieutenant who was his aide. The first question he asked was:

"How much money did you get for that story that was printed in the 'Herald' this morning?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," I answered, "I received nothing

for it. I can explain to you how that happened to be published. I simply did what any loyal American or ally would do."

Before I could go into very lengthy details of how the story had leaked out he interrupted me by asking me where I was born.

"Ask me where I came from," I replied, "I'll tell you that. I am under orders not to disclose the place of my birth. That is a military secret."

He was insistent, however, and finally I said that if he would have the civilian who was in the room leave, I would obey what I considered his command through respect for the uniform of a major of the United States Army which he wore.

He assured me that the man in civilian clothes was one of his confidential attaches and that it would be perfectly proper for me to make any statement in his presence.

"If that's so," I declared, "all right."

"I was born in Germany, at Koenigsberg, Prussia."

He leaned back in his chair, puffed meditatively a moment at a cigarette and said:

"Ah, that is quite an interesting little item. Are you registered as an enemy alien?"

"No," I replied, and immediately he gave a curt order to one of his subordinates to take me and have me registered. I asked him if he would not give me a few moments to explain my status. He granted this request and then I detailed to him my story of life in the German army, in the secret service of the Kaiser, my escape to England and from there to America under the protection of the British War Office.

His attitude immediately changed. He was all courtesy toward me then and taking out his cigarette case he offered me a smoke. He shook hands with me and told me that he was sorry that I had been put to any annoyance, but if my story

were true, things would come out all right. He added that he did not exactly know what would be the disposition of my case, but he thought that I would probably have to obey the law like any one else of enemy nativity and would have to be registered. He asked me if he could communicate with me by telephone and I gave him my private number and assured him that he could get in touch with me at any time. He thanked me and told me that he would let me know how matters stood with me in a day or so.



XII.

Interned at Fort Oglethorpe for Investigation, but Freed by a Just Government

I TOLD my wife of the difficulties that were still besieging me. She was helpless in bed and all this news did not help to improve her condition. She now had an added load of worry to burden her mind. The second day after my interview with Major Potter I received word from him to report at Police Headquarters for further questioning at half past eleven in the morning. I hastened to meet him after bidding my sick wife farewell, and in less than half an hour I was in his presence.

Little did I think that it would be nearly six months before I would be home again.

Major Potter was a fine type of American soldier. Personally he was of a sympathetic nature and apparently willing to do all he could for me. Sympathy and duty, however, could not mix. He was willing enough to believe my story, but I had nothing to corroborate it. Captain Guy Gaunt was the only one in the United States in authority who could vouch for me and as my star of ill-luck was still pursuing me, it just happened that he had been called to sea duty and I could not get in touch with him.

Instead of sending me with a subordinate Major Potter escorted me personally to the office of the Enemy Alien Bureau, where he arranged for an interview with Hon. Rufus W. Sprague, Jr., the chief of the bureau and special assistant to the Attorney-General at Washington for this district. One look at Mr. Sprague convinced me that he was a real, big-

hearted, just man, and his conversation and treatment of me strengthened this impression.

I was allowed to smoke and Mr. Sprague tried to make me feel at ease. I could not help but make a mental contrast of what would happen to a person in a similar predicament in the land of autocracy. I realized more fully than ever that I was in a land of equality and I was sure that justice would be done me, although I feared it might take some time before my case would be cleared up.

Mr. Sprague called in a confidential stenographer and for two hours I gave the details of what had led up to my coming to America. As soon as this was finished he got in touch with the British consulate.

Then he announced to me that he was sorry to be obliged to tell me that the British Office had no information in regard to my standing and that there was no trace of any communication between me and Captain Gaunt.

"The only thing for me to do," he said, "is to detain you."

I was crestfallen, but I agreed that there was no other course. I explained to him how my wife was confined to her bed in a helpless state and asked him if he could not grant me permission to say good-bye to her.

"I'm awfully sorry," he answered, "but the routine of the military law demands that you must go to an internment camp until your case can be thoroughly investigated."

He assured me that my wife would be well taken care of during my enforced absence, and immediately he called on the telephone for a nurse to whom he gave instructions to go to my home and break the news to my wife gently as possible and to do all she could to make her comfortable. Just imagine a thing like this happening in Germany! This little act of kindness and consideration made me feel happy as could be under the circumstances.

A marshal was called and I was placed in his custody. It had been a hard day for me and several hours had been spent in Mr. Sprague's office. I said that I was hungry and I was given special permission to go to any restaurant I pleased in company with the officer to satisfy my craving for food.

I asked Mr. Sprague if I might communicate with my wife during my period of detention. He assured me that I could write to her as often as I liked, and that as soon as she was feeling well enough he would certainly grant her permission to visit me. He bade me farewell, cordially, and I left with my custodian. The two of us had a hearty meal and then we started off for Newark, where I was to be detained. That night I wrote to my wife, telling her where I was and daily for two weeks we corresponded.

The second day that I was in the detention camp I was cheered up by receiving a letter from my wife, telling me that the nurse who had been sent to her was doing everything possible to comfort and aid her and that she was already feeling stronger and better.

After what I had been through in Germany I could hardly believe my senses at what was happening to me, a man under suspicion. At the end of a fortnight my wife communicated with Mr. Sprague and said that she would like to visit me or have me visit her, but that she was not in condition to take a trip as far as Newark.

Once more the big heart of this man was in evidence for he granted special permission for me to come over to his office, where I would be allowed to meet my wife. At the appointed time I came there and for an hour we were allowed to talk with each other. We were treated very kindly and permitted to go to luncheon together in the company of my custodian. We had several meetings of this sort as the weeks passed by.

After six weeks I was transferred to Ellis Island, where there was a large number awaiting internment. It was grim

for me, but I still had enough sense of humor to smile inwardly when one of the first persons I met was the Austrian who had been my tenant and who had been mixed up with Van Earp, and who was really the cause of all my present trouble.

I wrote immediately to my wife and told her that it was all like a nice vacation, for the food was of the best, the air of Ellis Island healthy, and the only fly in the ointment outside of the fact that I could not be home was that I was obliged to come in contact with that Austrian every day.

Of course all letters sent out from the camp were censored and the officer in charge communicated with Mr. Sprague, telling him of the peculiar situation. Immediately a reply was received that some mistake must have been made in having the two of us together and I was ordered to be transferred to the Raymond Street Civil Side in Brooklyn, where a whole floor was reserved for enemy aliens. Here again I found that the food was of the best, and I was afforded plenty of opportunity for exercise. My wife was given permission from Mr. Sprague to visit me at any time she cared to come.

I sojourned there three weeks when Saturday before Christmas I was told that a consignment of prisoners of war were to leave for Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., the following Monday. I was called on the telephone from Mr. Sprague's office, asking me if I should like to meet my wife before I left. They had granted her special permission and within an hour she was at my side, bidding me a tearful farewell.

She was game. She was standing by her guns. She believed in me and her last words to me were ones of assurance that it would not be long before I would be back home with her, to forget all that had happened in the past. I felt a bit cheery. Our little differences of the past faded into the background of other days. As we embraced for the last time I felt that a new era was dawning on me. I was confident that a new soul was being born within me. I knew I was going to be forevermore a loyal son of democracy.

A group of us were sent over to New York, where we were first examined at the enemy alien bureau and then put aboard a train under military guard, bound for Fort Oglethorpe. We arrived there on Christmas Eve. There was a close inspection of the prisoners as we detrained and when we entered the camp our predecessors cheered us. They seemed to be a happy, well-treated collection. What a difference there would have been in a German internment camp! Arrangements had been made for refreshments for us and we were soon assigned to our quarters.

We woke up on Christmas morning listening to the strains of a German military band that had been famous throughout China. The musicians had come from Tsing Tau on their way to Germany, when America declared war and were interned at Oglethorpe. Dr. Karl Muck, formerly conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, was leader in the concert during the course of the day.

Compared to what I had seen in Friederichsfeld, in Germany, this place was heaven. Here was what the prisoners had for their Christmas breakfast:

Fresh Fruit Boiled Ham Boiled Eggs
Milk Rice Raisin Bread
Butter, Syrup and Coffee

Dinner was even better, with roast turkey, cranberry sauce and all the trimmings of a real Yuletide Yankee home banquet. Supper was even as big a surprise.

As soon as breakfast was over I made a tour of exploration and my eyes popped as I saw in this camp a complete city. There were shops of all sorts. At one huge store you could purchase almost anything. There were barber shops, tailor shops and plenty of places where light refreshments might be purchased. Theatres, cinema houses, and concert halls were on the premises and there was no lack of amusement. In the

open there were all sorts of athletic fields where the prisoners might indulge in their favorite sports.

Time passed by swiftly enough. There was plenty of diversion. My trouble-star was still in the ascendency for it was not long before I got into an argument over the sinking of the "Lusitania." I maintained that Germany was unjustified in sinking the ship without allowing the passengers to disembark. I was jeered at by my fellow-prisoners who had learned that I was a deserter from the German army and they called me a traitor to the Fatherland and they began to make life miserable for me.

I felt that they had it in for me and I was prepared. One night while I was lying in my barracks, several missiles were cast in my direction. I had close beside me my boot, and at the first shot I cast it up at the electric bulb, shattering it and placing the quarters in darkness. I felt that I would be safer thus.

I reported the occurrence to the officer in charge and he had me transferred to another portion of the camp where I would be under special protection.

During my three months' stay at Oglethorpe I learned a lot about certain prisoners who were there, through talks that I had with them. There were many prominent men among them, and I discovered that many of them who wished to remain in this country were violently against the American Government, and in their hearts potential trouble-makers. Nearly all of them claimed that they had been interned without just cause, but I could find none of them who by their own admissions had not committed some overt act in violation of the code of war. I made no friends among them and was heartily glad when I saw that in the company which left Oglethorpe for the North there were none of these disturbers present.

On April 4, 1918, the anniversary of our marriage, another odd coincidence in my life, I was again to breathe the air of

freedom. My heart was gay as the train pulled out for the North. There were a half a dozen others who had been set free, but I did not mingle with them.

I rejoiced in the feeling that forever I was free from the taint of autocracy. Henceforth I was going into a new life; into the land of hope; the land of opportunity; to my wife once more and into the glorious environment of democracy.

The star of ill-luck had set at last, I was sure.



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